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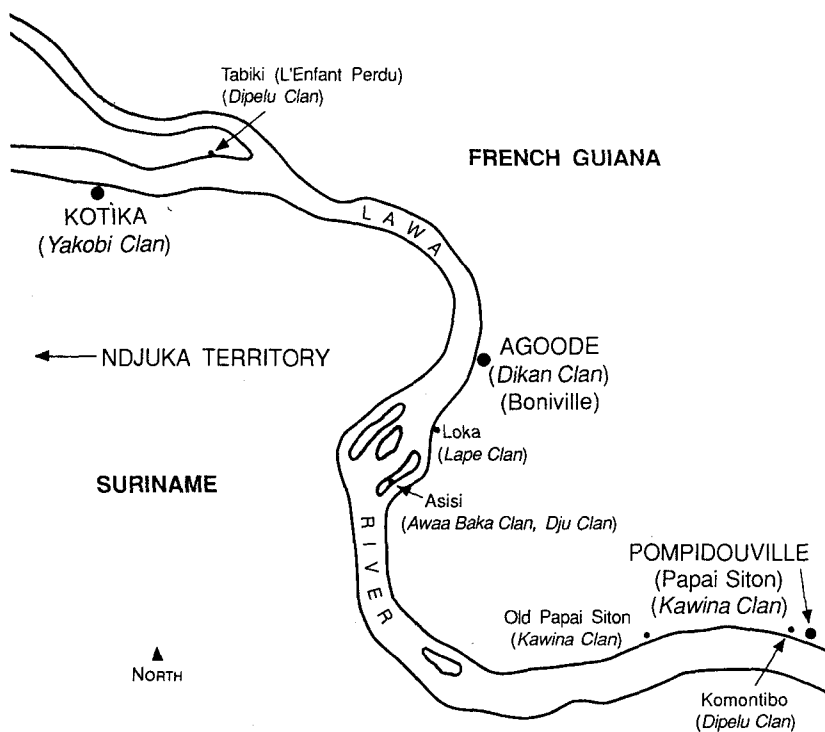
DIVIDED LOYALTIES: LOCAL POLITICS AND THE PLAY OF STATES AMONG THE ALUKU*

The scene is the northeastern coast of South America; the time, November 1986.¹ Civil war has broken out in eastern Suriname, and a flood of refugees streams into the French Guianese border town of Saint-Laurent, across the Maroni River from the Surinamese outpost Albina. Most of the refugees are Ndjuka Maroons whose villages have been attacked by Surinamese government forces.² Those who first greet them are Aluku Maroons, otherwise known as the Boni. It is the Aluku who mediate between the Ndjukas and local representatives of the French government. Aluku boatmen help organize the transportation of refugees across the river to safety, while Aluku *kapiten*, local headmen appointed by the French government to represent the larger Maroon community in Saint-Laurent, are consulted by the French sub-prefect and the mayor of the town for advice on the handling of the crisis. For all concerned, the mass exodus of Ndjukas is eerily reminiscent of the flight of the ancestors of the Aluku into French territory some two centuries earlier, when forced out of their haunts in the Cottica River region of Suriname by Dutch colonial troops.

Like the other five tribes of Guiana Maroons – the Ndjuka, Paramaka, Saramaka, Matawai, and Kwinti – the Aluku are descended from African slaves who centuries ago escaped from Surinamese plantations and fled into the unsettled forests of the interior, where they banded together to

*Editors' note: The bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989 has been an occasion to bring the Aluku or Boni Maroons and their 18th-century liberation struggles in the limelight.

Throughout 1989, a series of symposia named *Sur les traces de Boni* ('In the wake of Boni') were held in Cayenne, French Guiana. The first four articles of this issue were written by participants in these symposia. For her role as a convenor and for her editorial help the Editors wish to express their gratitude to dr. Wilhelmina van Wetering.

MAP OF TRADITIONAL ALUKU TERRITORY SHOWING
LOCATIONS OF VILLAGES AND CLANS MENTIONED

form new societies, and successfully resisted Dutch attempts to reconquer them. The Aluku, however, stand apart from the others in one important respect. While the Ndjuka and Saramaka made peace treaties with the Dutch in the 18th century, and the others later followed suit and declared their allegiance to the Dutch as well, the Aluku, as a group, never allied themselves with their former colonial masters. Instead, they clung to the French territory into which they had fled, making an uneasy peace with the Ndjukas living across the border along the Tapanahoni River, while seeking opportunities to treat with the French. It was not until 1860 that an agreement was finally concluded, and the Aluku became French subjects. In 1946, the colony of French Guiana became a French overseas department, and shortly after 1969, when the interior region where the Aluku live was integrated politically with the coast, the Aluku became French citizens – at least in theory.

There was one major obstacle to this idea of naturalization *en masse*. Rarely do colonial frontiers coincide with local ethnic boundaries, and the Aluku offer no exception to this dictum. One of the most important Aluku villages, called Kotika, happened to be located on the Dutch side of the river that separates French Guiana from Suriname. With a relatively large population, an especially weighty history, and a number of important traditional religious shrines and sacred spots, the village of Kotika could not be dismissed as an insignificant peripheral settlement. Nor were the inhabitants, strongly attached to their ancestral soil, willing to resettle across the river on the French side. They had, in fact, already come to terms with their anomalous situation, having long before taken the step of affiliating themselves, if only nominally, with the Dutch colonial government.

Today, Kotika remains a village apart. For the last few decades, it has been one of the theaters in which the drama of state penetration among the Aluku has most clearly been thrown into relief. This lone village has become the principal locus of political tensions stemming from the conflicting claims of two expanding states. By bringing into focus opposing allegiances and social schisms that are rooted in *both* traditional and colonial (as well as postcolonial) politics, the Aluku of Kotika provide us with a clear view, in capsule form, of the ways in which the state apparatus is becoming articulated with the traditional Aluku political system at the local level. Beyond this, the story of Kotika, this sole Surinamese enclave within an ethnic group otherwise defined as French, parallels at a more general level the story of the entire Aluku people, themselves ideologically isolated from their closely related Surinamese Maroon neighbors, the Ndjuka and the Paramaka, by their long-term association with the French.

In this sense, the divisiveness characterizing relations between Kotika and the other Aluku villages may serve as a metaphor for the political basis of Aluku ethnicity itself, when viewed in opposition to all the other Maroon groups. Let us proceed, then, with the story.

THE DISTANT PAST: ANATO'S REIGN AND THE HEYDAY OF KOTIKA

It was during the first half of the 18th century that the earliest ancestors of the Aluku escaped from coastal Surinamese plantations and established settlements in the forest. These first groups were over time joined by several others. Little is known of this early period, but by the 1760s, this group of rebels had come to pose a serious threat to the Cottica River region, their raids on the plantations taking a heavy toll and throwing the entire colony into panic.³ By this time, the Aluku consisted of a number of bands, joined together in a loosely organized federation. Over the ensuing decades, this federation was characterized by shifting alliances between a number of distinct groups, each under the leadership of its own headman; at various points, new bands joined the rebels, while others withdrew and struck out on their own.⁴ It was not until the end of the 18th century, after the Aluku had been subdued by the Dutch and their Ndjuka allies, that a number of these bands coalesced into a whole that contained most of the elements characterizing present-day Aluku social organization.

The foundation of Aluku social organization, the matrilineal clan known as the *lo*, began to evolve during the 18th century. Even though the founding members of a *lo* did not all originate from the same plantation, most clans became known by the name of a particular plantation (or plantation region) to which one or more of the leading original members of the band had belonged, or sometimes by the name of the plantation's owner.⁵ Early on, a principle of matrilineal descent was applied to these groupings, membership being passed on exclusively through females. Today the Aluku, with a population of between 1,500 and 2,000, are divided into six primary *lo*, and a number of smaller ones descended from more recent immigrants.⁶ These corporate clans, most of them localized in single villages, constitute the most important units of Aluku social organization. The Aluku individual receives his primary social identity from his *lo*; his loyalties, rights, and obligations are defined largely by his clan membership.⁷

Following the death of their leader Boni at the hands of the Ndjuka in 1793, the Aluku changed residence several times, establishing villages in a number of locations along the upper reaches of the Lawa River and its tributaries. Around 1815, the various clans traveled together to the

general area where the present-day Aluku villages are located. Eventually, all the clans came together to form a single large settlement called Pobiansi (from the French, "providence"), located on the Suriname side of the Lawa River, at a spot very near the present-day village of Kotika. For a number of years, the entire Aluku tribe lived at Pobiansi, which at the time was in fact made up of a cluster of adjoining hamlets, each inhabited by a different clan; one of the segments of Pobiansi was called Kotika, and it was inhabited by the clan called Yakobi. Sometime between 1866 and 1877, the Pobiansi cluster was renamed Kotika. Long before this, some of the clans had separated from Pobiansi and established new settlements on the French side of the river. But in spite of this, for most of the 19th century, Kotika remained the most important village and the residence of the paramount chief. As the century was drawing to a close, the remaining clans one by one split off from Kotika, fanning out along the French bank, where they established a succession of new villages. By the early 20th century, Kotika, now occupied by a single clan, the Yakobi clan, was the only remaining Aluku village on the Dutch side.⁸

The period when all Aluku lived in the vicinity of Kotika continues to be well remembered today. An important cemetery, where ancestors from all clans who died during this period are said to be buried, is located in the same general area as the village. This sacred ground serves as a reminder to all Aluku that, regardless of clan affiliation, they can claim ancestral ties to Kotika. As the oldest present-day Aluku village, and the only one to which almost all clans can trace their history, Kotika, then, has a special status.

Kotika has other historical claims to uniqueness as well, claims which continue to be invoked in the present. In order to understand how traditional political cleavages and state penetration have become interlinked, it is necessary to follow a particular historical thread through time. The story that concerns us begins in 1876 with the death of Gaanman Atjaba, the paramount chief of the Aluku. Atjaba, like several of his predecessors, belonged to the Dikan clan. According to traditional rules of succession, the office of *gaanman*, or paramount chief, had always to remain within the Dikan clan, the clan to which the great warrior and founding hero, Boni, had belonged. It is known that during the formative years of this society the chieftaincy in fact traveled in a somewhat irregular fashion, sometimes even being handed down from father to son. By the time of Atjaba's reign, however, well-established rules of succession, based on matrilineal principles, had been in effect for several generations. Ideally, the office would pass from the deceased chief to his sister's son, actual or classificatory, although alternative choices, such as a brother, cousin,



Gran-Man des Bonis

GAANMAN ANATO

(From Brunetti 1890: 158)

(Reproduction courtesy of the George Peabody
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or other fellow clansman, were acceptable, so long as the office remained within the matriclan. As in other Surinamese Maroon societies, the *gaanman* chose his desired successor from within this pool, but after his death, his wishes were subject to ratification or modification through a complicated process of divination in which the larger community played a part.⁹

As oral historians among the Aluku tell it, the timing of Atjaba's death was problematic. It so happened that at this critical juncture, the Dikan clan, whose numbers had diminished over the years, was lacking in eligible candidates.¹⁰ The only possible contender, an elder named Abaanga, was qualified in years and in knowledge, but his love of liquor and his frequent bouts of public drunkenness caused him to be passed over; the idea of such laxness in a paramount chief was unthinkable. It was necessary, thus, to find an alternative. A temporary compromise was found in the person of Anato, a respected elder of the Yakobi clan who was linked to the Dikan clan and the former *gaanman*'s own immediate family by ties of marriage. In an unprecedented move, the mantle of tribal authority was passed on from one clan to another, and Anato was installed as the new *gaanman*. Some present-day raconteurs are quick to point out that the Yakobi people simply "borrowed" the paramount chieftaincy from the Dikan clan, with the understanding that upon the death of Anato – since paramount chiefs reign for life – the office would be returned to its rightful owners. After all, they reason, no self-respecting clan would willingly forfeit its claims to ownership of this prestigious post permanently.¹¹

The reign of Gaanman Anato, from 1876 to 1891, coincided with the first great wave of the gold rush that was to transform the interior of the Guianas during the last quarter of the 19th century.¹² The massive influx of gold miners that poured into the Aluku territory during this period – numbering in the thousands – represented an advance guard of capitalist penetration in the region, but what they helped introduce among the Aluku was not a direct extension of state capitalism; for the majority of miners during this period operated in a highly individualistic, independent fashion, and were largely successful in escaping both French and Dutch control.¹³ They were less successful, however, in escaping the control of the Aluku, on whom they were dependent for transportation on the rivers, and to a lesser extent, for provisions. While the bonanza lasted, the Aluku boatmen charged exorbitant fees for their services. Gaanman Anato himself proved to be particularly adept at squeezing profits from the gold rush, enriching himself and his village by levying taxes on all gold extracted within his territory.¹⁴

The freewheeling nature of gold exploitation during this period resulted partly from the fact that the area in which the Aluku lived formed part

of a contested zone, to which both the French and the Dutch had laid claim. It was not until the late 1880s that a definitive border was decided upon. In 1891, the Lawa River was formally declared to be the boundary between French and Dutch territory, and as it happened, Anato's village of Kotika was on the Dutch side.¹⁵ In the years preceding this decision, it had become increasingly apparent what the outcome of the boundary dispute was likely to be, and Anato, in anticipation of the change, moved to cement his ties with the French.¹⁶ In 1887, he concluded an agreement with the French governor, which formally recognized the Alukus' right to intervene in gold production in the contested zone. During the last few years before his death, he sent a number of further communications to the governor, proclaiming his loyalty to the French. In a letter of 1889, for instance, Anato declared: "our most ardent desire is to *remain French*" (Hurault n.d.: 209, emphasis in original).¹⁷

In 1891, while the problem of state allegiance was coming to a head, Gaanman Anato died, and the question of succession had to be confronted once again. It was in this same year that the division of the traditional Aluku territory into separate French and Dutch domains was formalized. If anything, this new state of affairs must have weakened any claims the Yakobi people, whose village of Kotika now indisputably lay on Dutch soil, might have used to justify the retention of the paramount chieftaincy within their own clan. As present-day oral historians emphasize, once a clan has tasted the privileged status that goes along with this coveted office, quite naturally, it will be loath to relinquish it. It was thus with heavy heart, and only under the pressure of public opinion as expressed through divination, that the Yakobi people "returned" the paramount chieftaincy to its traditional owners, the people of the Dikan clan. It was shortly after 1891 that the new *gaanman* was installed; his name was Osii, and he was a respected elder of the Dikan clan. The status quo had been restored, and for the next seven decades the chieftaincy was to remain an exclusive Dikan possession. Following Gaanman Osii's death in 1915, the office passed to his brother Awensai. When Gaanman Awensai died in 1936, the chosen successor was Awensai's sister's son, a respected member of the Dikan clan named Difu. Gaanman Difu held the office until his death in 1967.¹⁸

The glory days of the Yakobi clan were over. After being deprived of the paramount chieftaincy in 1891, the elders of Kotika attempted to recoup their losses by courting the French colonial authorities and seeking official recognition of what they saw as their special status. This entailed an assertion of French allegiance on their part, even though their village was now located on Dutch territory, and a corresponding rejection of Dutch rule

(Hurault 1960:136-137). The Dutch, as they had in the 1860s, attempted once again to win the Aluku over to their side as soon as Anato's death raised the issue of succession. The Aluku apparently played both sides for a time, and a prominent Aluku *kapiten*, Apatu, even went so far as to meet with a Dutch official in 1891 to discuss the question of who was likely to be chosen as the next *gaanman*. Apatu requested a number of gifts and a Dutch flag from Paramaribo. The Dutch, for their part, hoped to persuade the Aluku to declare themselves Dutch subjects by offering to provide the new paramount chief with a salary equivalent to the one paid by the French.¹⁹

When some of the requested items arrived from Paramaribo, however, the Aluku ended up rejecting them. They elected instead to send a delegation, including the new paramount chief Osii, to Saint-Laurent, so as to reaffirm their loyalty to the French.²⁰ In 1892, the villagers of Kotika formally protested the idea of incorporation into the Dutch state by refusing to fly the Dutch flag, an incident which prompted the French governor to send them a message assuring them that France "still considers the Boni to be her perennial children, though they live on foreign soil" (Hurault n.d.: 218).²¹ In the same communication, the governor went on to invite the people of Kotika to resettle on the French side of the river, where all the other Aluku villages were already located. For a brief period of a decade or so, Kotika was partially abandoned, some of its inhabitants moving to temporary camps on the other side of the river (Hoogbergen 1985:388). The Yakobi clan, however, was not willing to abandon its ancestral terrain permanently, for doing so would have meant sacrificing the prestige that their special relationship with the oldest surviving Aluku village had lent them.

In 1902, the Yakobis, led by their headman Kapiten Bayo, turned back to Kotika and once again took up permanent residence on Dutch soil. The decision to remain in Kotika made necessary some sort of compromise with the Dutch colonial authorities. But the Dutch apparently remained suspicious of the residents of Kotika. For though Kapiten Bayo over the course of his lifetime made five voyages to the Surinamese capital of Paramaribo seeking an appointment as village headman, he was never granted official recognition by the colonial authorities (Hoogbergen 1985: 388).²² The Yakobi people nevertheless persisted in their avowals of allegiance to the Dutch, and eventually were rewarded with formally sanctioned posts for their village headmen, as well as a number of assistant headmen (*basia*). The paid positions created by the Dutch colonial government after 1949 continued to be honored by the Surinamese government following independence in 1975.²³ On the eve of the civil war

that erupted in Suriname in 1986, the Yakobi clan of Kotika boasted two salaried village headmen, or *kapiten*, as well as several official *basia*; and a special new position of an unprecedented sort, called *hoofdkapitein*, had just recently been instituted by the Surinamese government, a matter to which we will return in a moment.²⁴ Kotika, the oldest surviving Aluku village, had become irrevocably *Doisi*, a word in the Aluku language originally meaning "Dutch," but which has continued to be used after independence to refer to things Surinamese. The alliance had not been without its political and economic benefits. But the cleavage between Kotika and the Yakobi clan on the one hand, and all the other Aluku villages and clans on the other, had been greatly widened in the process.²⁵ And it was among the latter group, the French-affiliated majority, that the office of paramount chief was still to be found, though it was now held by yet another clan, known as Kawina. To understand how the chieftaincy passed from its traditional Dikan owners to the Kawina clan, it is necessary to go back to where we left off and pick up the thread once again.

KEY TO ALUKU CHARACTERS MENTIONED IN TEXT

ARAMOUNT CHIEFS (*GAANMAN*)

	<i>Died</i>	<i>Clan</i>
ATJABA	1876	DIKAN (YAKOBI?)
ANATO	1891	YAKOBI
OSII	1915	DIKAN
AWENSAI	1936	DIKAN
DIFU	1967	DIKAN
TOLINGA	-	KAWINA

CONTENDERS

	<i>Active During</i>	<i>Clan</i>
MANTO (TOTI)	1970s	YAKOBI
PEETI	1980s	YAKOBI

OTHERS

	<i>Active During</i>	
TUTU (Difu's 1st Choice)	1950s-60s	YAKOBI

THE RECENT PAST: MANTO'S ATTEMPT

During the decades following Gaanman Anato's death in 1891, the gold rush began to taper off, going into a rapid decline in the 1930s. Never again was the traditional Aluku territory, now divided between two European colonial powers, to experience a surge of economic activity comparable to the one that had swelled the coffers of Gaanman Anato and his village of Kotika during the late 19th century. For most of the 20th century, when paramount chiefs from the Dikan clan once again reigned, the interior of French Guiana and Suriname remained relatively quiet. The center of economic gravity began to shift back to the coastal region, and the Aluku were for the most part ignored by those at the center of power. In 1930, French Guiana was divided into two separate administrative sections. The Inini territory, the interior section in which the Aluku lived, was administered indirectly, leaving the local populations more or less free to govern themselves as they saw fit, with a minimum of interference from outside. Thus, the change of status occurring in 1946, when French Guiana was incorporated into the French republic as an overseas department, had relatively little effect on the Aluku. During the 1960s, however, the political machinery of the coastal society began to push to have the Inini territory integrated politically with the coast, for the populations of the interior represented valuable potential votes.

In 1967, while the first hints of major political change were in the air, Gaanman Difu died. As had happened once before, there was no heir apparent. The Dikan clan, always small, had failed to maintain an adequate number of childbearing women and by 1967 had for all intents and purposes vanished, leaving not a single eligible male. This conjunction of watershed events in the 1960s bore an uncanny resemblance to the set of circumstances surrounding the temporary transfer of the paramount chieftaincy from the Dikan clan to the Yakobi clan back in 1876. Once again, the outside world was knocking at the Alukus' doors, and a time of great potential opportunity seemed to be at hand; and once again, the paramount chieftaincy was up for grabs.

Contenders for the office of paramount chief were quick to appear. For months on end, palavers were held, and traditional techniques of divination were employed to address the ambiguities resulting from the imminent extinction of the Dikan clan. The neighboring Ndjuka had their own Dikan clan, historically related to the Aluku clan of the same name, and representatives from the Dikan village of Benanu arrived in Aluku, hoping to be recognized as the only possible legitimate successors to

Gaanman Difu.²⁶ But being Ndjukas, traditional enemies of the Aluku, these emissaries stood little chance of swaying public opinion in their favor.²⁷

Eventually, two serious contenders came to the fore. One was a man named Tolinga, a member of the Kawina clan who had previously worked as a boatman for a number of French expeditions into the interior, and who was known for the friendly ties he had cultivated with French government officials. Tolinga had been named after a French adventurer and entrepreneur, Tollinge, who during the 1850s had helped the Aluku establish friendly relations with the French and had been instrumental in smoothing the way for the 1860 treaty recognizing the Aluku as French subjects. Tolinga's very name, thus, came to stand for a position advocating increasing French influence in the Aluku territory.²⁸

The Yakobi people of Kotika were of a different mind. They saw the opening created by Gaanman Difu's death as an opportunity to recapture their past glory. The candidate they favored was a member of the Yakobi clan named Manto (also known as Toti), whose paternal grandfather, Samalobi, was an influential Dikan elder who had once come very close to being named paramount chief himself. It was widely rumored among the Aluku that Gaanman Difu's choice for his successor was originally to have been a Yakobi man named Tutu, had the latter outlived him. But Tutu's premature death in 1963 suddenly changed the scenario.²⁹ When Difu followed Tutu to the grave but a few years later, there was little consensus on the question of who was to take his place. In the intervening period, too little time had passed for public opinion to have gelled. The Yakobi people, though, having already decided that the paramount chieftaincy had been intended for one of their own, whether Tutu or someone else, were not about to let it pass to another clan. They quickly took the position that Manto was Gaanman Difu's obvious second choice, after Tutu. They pointed out that Manto, like Tutu, had worked closely with Difu, and they claimed that he had received specialized religious instruction from the former *gaanman* before his death.³⁰

Not long after Difu's death, the Kotika people sent a delegation to Paramaribo. The delegation met with Johan Pengel, the leader of the NPS (*Nationale Partij Suriname*), and requested that Manto be recognized as paramount chief of the Aluku. The delegation was given encouragement, but no action was taken (*Dagblad De West*, August 17, 1972). Back at home, Manto's supporters relied on the weight of precedent. They argued that theirs was the only clan other than the Dikan clan ever to have shouldered the heavy responsibilities that go with the paramount chieftaincy, and it was only because of the Dikan elders' high regard for them that the office had been passed on to their fellow clansman Anato nearly

a century earlier.³¹ In their view, Manto was clearly the rightful heir to an office which, after all, had already been in their possession once before.³² The Ndjuka Dikan visitors from Benanu, once they realized that they themselves had no chance, threw their support behind Manto, adding additional weight to the arguments of the Yakobi people.

Into this turbulent picture stepped the French authorities. Early on, while the dispute was still being negotiated, the Aluku happened to receive a number of visits from important French officials, including a *conseiller général* from Cayenne with whom Tolinga was personally acquainted. Only vaguely aware of the political dynamics behind the dispute, the French representatives, after a bit of intriguing with both factions, sided with Tolinga's supporters. The conflict was still unresolved when a candidate running for the French National Assembly paid a campaign visit to the Aluku, who were soon to be enfranchised. Before a large crowd, the politician, with the help of an interpreter, extolled the virtues of French citizenship and regaled his audience with promises of a new era of prosperity and greater cooperation between the French and the Aluku. Before long, the great majority of the Aluku – all the clans living on the French side – had rallied behind Tolinga. When the French government finally gave its official stamp of approval, and the assembled Aluku clans, minus the Yakobis, performed the traditional rituals formalizing Tolinga's installation as paramount chief, no one was surprised.³³

The people of Kotika, not to be outdone, had earlier decided on a strategy of their own. Before Tolinga had been formally inaugurated, they moved to preempt the office by performing their own version of the traditional ceremonies and installing Manto, their own candidate, as paramount chief.³⁴ Lo and behold, the Aluku, for the first time in their history, had two *gaanman*!³⁵ The French, of course, were unwilling to grant Manto even the slightest sign of recognition; after all, he was, as far as they were concerned, a ward of the Dutch state, living on Dutch soil. Nor was the promised official recognition from Paramaribo forthcoming; when Pengel's government fell in 1969, the idea of a Surinamese Aluku *gaanman* apparently fell with it.

The Kotika people, however, were not ready to abandon their cause. In August 1972, Manto paid a visit to the office of Districtsbestuur en Decentralisatie in Paramaribo, hoping to persuade the authorities to grant him what had earlier been promised. The most the government was willing to offer, however, was a position called *hoofdkapitein*, mid-way between *gaanman* and village chief (*kapiten*) in rank. Manto and his followers rejected the offer as being beneath the dignity of someone who had already been installed as *gaanman* according to Aluku custom (*Dagblad De West*, August

8, 1972).³⁶ Not long after this, the hopes of the Kotika people were raised once again when Olton van Genderen, one of the leaders of the NSP, declared he would be able to fulfill the old promise to name Manto paramount chief if his party were to win the upcoming 1973 elections (*Dagblad De West*, October 3, 1974). The voters of Kotika were no doubt expected to keep this in mind as they cast their ballots.³⁷ In 1974, after the elections, van Genderen invited Manto to Paramaribo and assured him that he would soon be made paramount chief, probably as early as September of that year (*Dagblad De West*, February 16, May 30, and October 3, 1974). But for reasons that are not entirely clear, Manto's official installation on the coast never took place. According to a number of Alukus from villages on the French side, the authorities in Paramaribo, once they had achieved their political ends, reneged once again on their promise. Not only did they point out that a small tribe such as the Aluku was not entitled to two paramount chiefs when all the other Maroon groups each had only one, but they hastened to remind the Kotika upstarts that the Aluku as a group had always been allies of the French.³⁸ Lacking a government salary, Manto, the Kotika *gaanman*, was reduced to making boats and cassava presses and selling them for a living, a humiliating fate for a paramount chief. For the other Aluku clans, the *gaanman* of Kotika had become little more than a joke.³⁹

Gaanman Tolinga, meanwhile, was helping to usher in a new epoch along the French side of the river. In 1969, the Inini territory was integrated with the coast, and shortly thereafter, a number of French *communes* were created in the interior. Tolinga was appointed the first mayor of the new *commune* of Grand-Santi-Papaïchton, which had been implanted on the traditional Aluku territory, and presided over the distribution of a plethora of administrative funds. Before long, the Aluku *commune* was swimming in money, dispensed from Paris.⁴⁰ Through all the changes, the paramount chieftaincy had successfully been transferred from the Dikan to the Kawina clan. The problem of legitimacy had been solved by the dredging up of an obscure oral tradition which held that the Dikan and Kawina people were in fact relatives; they were known by different names, it was asserted, only because their ancestors had been separated and placed on different plantations in the distant past. This oral tradition was invoked from time to time to give ideological support to current political realities.⁴¹ In the meantime, the two sides of the river had grown farther apart than ever, and for some years, the people of Kotika and those of the other clans, as the Aluku phrase it, "refused to greet one another."

THE MORE RECENT PAST: PEETI'S AMBITIONS

At the time of my arrival among the Aluku in 1983, the people of Kotika and the residents of the other Aluku villages were once again on speaking terms. On the surface at least, relations between the two sides of the river were cordial, mutual bonds of kinship and marriage between Kotika and the other villages having gradually helped to palliate the tensions between them. The Yakobi people had eventually come to acknowledge Tolinga, if somewhat begrudgingly, as their paramount chief – or so it seemed. In fact, they had had little choice in the matter, for Tolinga had early gained control of the Tata Odun oracle, the supreme tribal oracle of the Aluku.⁴² Few of the essential rituals in Aluku life, from ceremonies legitimating new spirit mediums to funeral rites, could be performed without consultation of this oracle, and Tolinga, as paramount chief, held the key to such consultations. If the Yakobi people were properly to bury their dead, or if they were to succeed in warding off the *kunu*, or avenging spirits, that afflict all Aluku clans, then their only option was to come to terms with Gaanman Tolinga.⁴³

It was while attending a ceremony held for the purpose of placating one such *kunu*, an avenging spirit currently attacking the Yakobi clan, that I caught my first glimpse of the village of Kotika early in 1984. The propitiatory rites had been duly approved by Gaanman Tolinga, and a large crowd comprised of members of various different clans, including the Kawina clan, had descended upon the village to offer support. The spirit of cooperation between clans left a strong impression. Yet, it was immediately evident that Kotika was a village apart. Surinamese flags had been posted at the main clearing in the center of the village, where the ceremony was held. The official assembly hall, bearing a sign in Sranan, the coastal language of Suriname, and the schoolhouse, where classes were taught in Dutch, contrasted with the French gendarmerie, school, and clinic located at the center of Tolinga's village of Pompidouville (Papai Siton) on the other side of the river.⁴⁴ Kotika also possessed a small air field, and was linked to the Surinamese capital of Paramaribo by regular flights.

Over the next two years, it became ever more apparent that relations between Kotika and the other Aluku villages were somewhat strained. In Komontibo, where I was based, and the neighboring village of Papai Siton, I began to hear whisperings of complaint about the Yakobi people. The people of Kotika, so went the most common charge against them, were "spoiling the river" (i.e. acting so as to create disunity in the traditional Aluku territory, the "Aluku River" [*Aluku Liba*], as the region is known

in local parlance). They were not conducting themselves as Alukus should. One day, a mixed party of people from the Kawina and Dipelu clans went downstream to drug a certain portion of the river for fish. On the advice of a couple of Kotika people, whose village was located downstream and who thus knew the area better than they did, they spent the day working at a particular spot. When they returned to Komontibo with a meager catch, they accused the Yakobi people of having purposely misled them to a place where the water was too deep for the amount of poison they had, so as to keep the really good spot for themselves. On another occasion, the Yakobi people took a decision, without consulting the other clans, to excise a certain standard portion of the traditional death rites from all funeral ceremonies taking place in Kotika. All such decisions are properly made only in the context of public meetings in which all clans are represented, and this breach of etiquette drew strong criticism from all the other villages. There were several other such incidents during my stay, and they usually led to the same refrain: "the Kotika people are spoiling the river."⁴⁵

This recurring accusation took on new meaning when placed in the larger context of interethnic relations in the Lawa River area. For the same charge was simultaneously being leveled against the neighboring Ndjukas of the Tapanahoni River in Suriname. Since the introduction of French *communes* in the Aluku territory in the early 1970s, the region had received increasing numbers of Ndjuka visitors, attracted by the artificial economy that had been created by the sudden influx of French administrative funds. River transportation between the French *commune* of Maripasoula and the coastal town of Saint-Laurent, once the province of the Aluku, had come to be monopolized by Ndjuka boatmen. During a series of Aluku council meetings I attended in various villages over a period of two years, I was witness to mounting tension. The Aluku had not forgotten how the Ndjuka, in league with the Dutch, had subjugated their ancestors during the first half of the 19th century. Speeches were made, pointing out that the Ndjuka were once again trying to dominate the Aluku, this time by invading their territory and siphoning off its wealth. On more than one occasion, the possibility of banning all Ndjukas from Aluku territory was discussed. The Ndjuka were "spoiling the river," and the Alukus of Kotika were their henchmen. For in declaring themselves Surinamese, the Yakobi people were identifying themselves with the Ndjuka as much as with the Paramaribo government. Hadn't the Kotika people intermarried with Ndjukas more than had any other Aluku clan? Perhaps, it was insinuated, they wanted to become Ndjukas themselves. And their village headmen, with their Surinamese uniforms, were known to put on

the same airs as Ndjuka dignitaries. One of them even spoke the Ndjuka dialect, rather than Aluku, having been raised in the village of his Ndjuka father.

Behind this tension, as I was to discover, lay the same thread running back to 1876, when the first Yakobi paramount chief, Anato, took office. Let us pick up this thread one final time. After the death of Manto, the would-be paramount chief from Kotika, which occurred around 1980, representatives of the Yakobi clan again approached the Paramaribo government, still hoping to be awarded their own paramount chieftaincy within the fledgling independent Republic of Suriname.⁴⁶ The Paramaribo government responded, as it had in the days of Manto, with a compromise; the Aluku of Kotika would not be allowed a full-fledged *gaanman*, but instead would have a special position created for them, that of *ede-kapiten* (in Dutch, *hoofdkapitein*, meaning "head captain").⁴⁷ This office would be mid-way between village headman and paramount chief, and it would have a larger salary and greater prestige than the position of plain *kapiten*.⁴⁸

This new turn of events allowed the tradition of Gaanman Anato and his latter-day analogue, Manto, to be revived by a Yakobi man named Peeti, who was selected to serve as the first *hoofdkapitein*. When I first arrived among the Aluku, the chosen occupant of the new position, now known as "Kapiten Peeti," had only recently returned from his inauguration in Paramaribo.⁴⁹ Within a short time, Kapiten Peeti was being treated by the Surinamese government as an important dignitary, receiving invitations, along with his two village headman, to all official functions and meetings in Paramaribo to which the paramount chiefs of all the other Maroon groups were invited. Upon returning to Aluku from one such official visit in 1986, Peeti took it upon himself to call a large meeting, to which he invited headmen from all the other clans, so that he could report the proceedings to his fellow Aluku. The meeting took place on the relatively neutral ground of Agoode (Boniville), the village belonging to the Dikan clan and the traditional residence of the Aluku *gaanman*; for Kapiten Peeti refused to hold any conferences in the Kawina village of Papai Siton, the current residence of the paramount chief. Gaanman Tolinga was conspicuously absent. In the following weeks, the headmen and elders of various clans exchanged opinions; the consensus was that, once again, as in the days of Anato, and more recently, Manto, the Yakobi people were trying to maneuver their way into having their own *gaanman*. The accusations went further: the Yakobis were collaborating with the Paramaribo government in its attempts to bring the Aluku under Surinamese control. The plan, rumor had it, was to place the Kotika *ofru-kapiten* (*hoofdkapitein*) under the command of the Ndjuka paramount chief,

Gaanman Gazon, thus bringing at least a portion of the Aluku population once again under Ndjuka rule.⁵⁰ Here was one more proof, observers noted, of what people had been saying all along: "the Kotika people are spoiling the river."

Thus ends the historical thread we have been following, a thread that runs through and stitches together more than a century of interpenetrating colonial, postcolonial, and local-level politics. The breach between Kotika and the other villages is now accepted as a fact of life, and the divisive play of states among the Aluku has been integrated with local mythology. It all goes back, I was told by oral historians, to the great founding hero, Tata Aluku, from whom the entire tribe took its name.⁵¹ Tata Aluku was a founding member of the Yakobi clan, the Kotika clan, and he was distinguished from all other ancestors by his special role of protector. It was Tata Aluku, the story goes, who was charged with the responsibility of hiding women, children, and invalids at a special sanctuary whenever the ancestors were threatened by attack during the 18th-century struggles against the Dutch colonial regime; the founding heroes of the other clans, on the other hand, were all mere warriors. The Yakobi people have always argued during public gatherings of the clans that theirs deserves special recognition, because of the unique, crucial role played by their ancestor Tata Aluku. The other clans, of course, are quick to retort that great warriors are at least as important as passive protectors. But the Yakobi people of Kotika, the descendants of Tata Aluku, remain unmoved by such arguments. As an elder from the Dipelu clan, speaking for all the other clans, once explained to me, "this is why we and the Yakobi people will never be able to get along."⁵²

In late 1986, the military government of Suriname went to war with the Maroons, and the village of Kotika, like the rest of the interior, was cut off from the coastal region. It remains to be seen how the Alukus of Kotika, still clinging to their sacred ancestral village on Surinamese soil, will respond to the crisis in the long run. But the split between the two sides of the river has, if anything, widened since the outbreak of war. By 1989, Kapiten Peeti was not only acting as *ofru-kapiten* of Kotika, but was now publicly and explicitly challenging Gaanman Tolinga, asserting outright that he himself, as Anato's rightful heir, was the only one with a legitimate claim on the Aluku paramount chieftaincy.⁵³ Nearly a century has passed since Gaanman Anato's death in 1891, but the thwarted ambitions of those fellow Yakobis who had hoped at the time to follow in their leader's footsteps continue to make themselves felt to this day. In a society saturated with a sense of history, there is nothing extraordinary about such persisting claims.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

The story of Kotika reminds us once again that there are always two sides to the process of political, as well as economic, penetration into foreign domains. Needless to say, those on the receiving end of such transactions never remain mere passive witnesses. One cannot understand what the gradual incorporation of peoples such as the Aluku into larger politics actually entails without having some grounding in the local cultural and political frame of reference from which their responses derive meaning. In the Aluku case, the play of expanding states has repeatedly dovetailed with what may be called, for want of a better terms, vernacular political culture.

This history of interpenetrating political systems sheds light as well on the larger picture of interethnic relations in French Guiana. Kotika, the odd man out, is emblematic of the powerful role sometimes played by political alignments in the process of defining ethnic identities and interethnic relations. For Kotika (a small Surinamese island surrounded by a French sea) is to the other Aluku villages as the entire Aluku tribe (a French-affiliated enclave enveloped by a Surinamese ocean) is to its much more populous Surinamese Maroon neighbors. Though contacts between them are increasing, and in spite of the fact that they speak very close, mutually-intelligible dialects of a single language, and possess very similar, historically-related cultures, the Aluku and their Maroon neighbors, the Ndjuka and Paramaka, show evidence of growing ever farther apart. Memories of past enmity cannot alone account for this. One is reminded of the situation described by John Cole and Eric Wolf in their study (1974) of Tyrolean ethnicity in the Alpine villages of Tret and St. Felix; in this study, the authors show how cultural differences between these two villages, even though they share a single ecological niche, have gained heightened significance because of a long history of political separation brought about by shifting national boundaries. Something akin to this seems to be occurring among the French-affiliated Aluku, their Surinamese Ndjuka neighbors, and the village of Kotika, caught in the middle.

It is important to keep in mind, as a final thought, that divided loyalties are not new to the Aluku or their Maroon neighbors. Political schisms, opposing alignments, and clan and lineage fission have characterized these societies since their inception. What is so interesting about the case described here, though, is that these processes, in becoming articulated with political forces emanating from distant centers of state power, have contributed to a heightened and newly politicized sense of ethnic identity among the Aluku. The village of Kotika, by going its own way politically and serving

as a foil, has paradoxically enhanced ethnic solidarity at one level while creating divisiveness at another. In so doing, it has shown that the ambitions of even one remote little enclave may have a bearing on the play of states.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Wim Hoogbergen and Richard Price for a number of comments and suggestions which helped in the preparation of this paper. A special debt is owed to Wim Hoogbergen and Ben Scholtens, each of whom provided me with a good deal of information from various unpublished or unobtainable written sources; their generous sharing of information made possible a better understanding of the events at Kotika than I could have achieved relying on oral accounts alone. The field research on which this study is based (carried out between 1983 and 1987) was generously supported by the Fulbright-Hays program, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the (U.S.) National Science Foundation.
2. For background on the civil war in Suriname, providing a Maroon perspective, see Polimé and Thoden van Velzen (1988) and Thoden van Velzen (1988).
3. See Stedman (1988) for a dramatic eyewitness account of this turbulent period.
4. This early period of Aluku history is described in great detail in Hoogbergen (1984), Hoogbergen (1985), and De Beet (1984). See also De Groot (1975).
5. See Hoogbergen (1985:413-416).
6. This population estimate is based on an extrapolation from genealogical and census data I collected in several Aluku villages between 1984 and 1986. Recent official estimates, based on government censuses, are extremely unreliable, owing to the high mobility of the Aluku population and the lack of rigorously controlled census-taking procedures in the Aluku area to date.
7. If this description sounds strange to students of other Suriname Maroon societies, it is because the Aluku differ from these other societies in certain respects. Unlike the *lo* of other Maroon societies such as the Ndjuka and Saramaka, the Aluku *lo* is not further divided into named, corporate lineages known as *bee* (see Köbben 1967, Price 1975). Among the Aluku, the terms *lo* and *bee* are used interchangeably to refer to the corporate clans mentioned above, although the former term is the most common one. (The term *bee* is also sometimes loosely used to refer to matrilineal descendants of a common ancestress who have no corporate identity as such, or even to the children of one mother.) In keeping with the literature on Suriname Maroons, I translate the word *lo* with the English word "clan," although among the Aluku the *lo* corresponds in several respects with the corporate lineages called *bee* in other Maroon societies. This difference has caused a good deal of confusion in previous treatments of Aluku social organization. It is a question I will take up in detail in later writings.

8. This brief sketch of the history of Pobiansi and Kotika is based on a combination of written sources and oral traditions I collected among the Aluku between 1983 and 1987. Hoogbergen (1985:373) cites archival documents indicating that the Aluku were living near the present-day village of Kotika by the 1820s. Ronmy (1861:785), who visited the Aluku in 1860, mentions Pobiansi, then the village of the *gaanman*, as well as Kotika and a number of other settlements. Vidal (1862:644), who visited Pobiansi in 1861, mentions that there were three other small villages situated alongside it. According to Hurault (1965:14), "the Boni [Aluku] villages remained at the same location from 1815 to 1895, grouped around the present-day site of Kotika" (my translation). Hoogbergen (1985:424) writes: "In the period from circa 1815 to 1890 the Aluku lived in one village, named Aluku or Kotika. In this village the various clans lived in separate sections (*pisi*). The combined French-Dutch mission that visited the Aluku in 1860 names the *pisi*: Kotika, Asisi, Lapé and Kormotibo" (my translation). (In fact, some of the clans had split off from Pobiansi and formed villages on the French side long before 1890.) By the time Crevaux (1879:716) visited the Aluku in 1877, Pobiansi had been replaced by "Kotika" as the residence of the *gaanman*. Brunetti (1890:159), who paid a visit to the Aluku *gaanman* in 1886, writes of the "quatre villages qui forment le groupe de Cottica" ("four villages forming the Kotika group"). A year or so later, when Coudreau (1888:458; 1893:46) visited the area, Kotika was still the residence of the *gaanman*, and he noted that it had two adjoining "faubourgs," called "La Paix" and "Séeye." It is common knowledge among present-day Aluku elders that the entire tribe once "lived together at Kotika," each clan having its own *pisi* – its own little village section(s) within the cluster. The names of several of these hamlets are remembered and continue to be invoked in public discourse today: Lape, Seei, Boon Mila Konde, Tutu, Pobiansi, Moi Uman Kiiki, Meenso, Yao Kiiki. The southernmost section (*pisi*) of the present-day village of Kotika has retained the name "Lape," although it is no longer inhabited by people of the Lape clan. The Lape people now live in the village of Loka on the French side; the section of Kotika today called Lape has long been occupied by members of the Yakobi clan.

9. According to custom, the *gaanman* is supposed to reveal his choice of successor to only one or two confidants. After his death, it is the responsibility of these individuals to make his wishes public. As can be imagined, this often leaves the way open for a good deal of maneuvering by competitors, all of whom may be able to bring forward individuals claiming to have been taken into the deceased *gaanman*'s confidence.

10. According to Hurault (1969:70), Gaanman Atjaba belonged to the Yakobi clan, and it was to him that the office of *gaanman* was first passed by the Dikan clan, in 1870; when he died in 1876, according to this version, the office was kept within the Yakobi clan and passed on to Anato. Hoogbergen (1985:419), apparently following Hurault, seems to agree on this point. At least one Yakobi oral historian with whom I spoke supported this version as well. If this version is accurate, then the events described here in fact occurred around 1870 rather than 1876, and the deceased Dikan *gaanman* was Atjaba's predecessor Adan, rather than Atjaba himself. According to oral traditions I collected from elders of a number of different clans, however, Atjaba and Abaanga both belonged to the Dikan clan, and Anato, Gaanman Atjaba's successor, was the first and only Yakobi *gaanman*. Until definitive archival evidence to the contrary is located, I see no reason to reject this version, given by a wide range of present-day Aluku elders.

11. This account of the transfer of the paramount chieftaincy from the Dikan to the Yakobi clan is based primarily on oral traditions collected among the Aluku in 1985-6.

12. Jules Brunetti, a Catholic missionary who briefly visited the village of Kotika in 1886, has left us with a fairly lengthy, if superficial, description of Anato and his village (Brunetti 1890). Coudreau (1893) also devotes some space to a discussion of Anato.

13. See Petot (1986:102-143).

14. For detailed information on the high fees charged by Maroon boatmen in the Lawa-Maroni basin during this period, see De Beet and Thoden van Velzen (1977:126). These authors estimate that between 1900 and 1910, the Maroon boat crews plying the Lawa and its tributaries, including the Aluku boatmen, had a collective income of 600,000 florins per year. Coudreau (1893:49) asserts that Gaanman Anato laid claim to 15-20% of the gold extracted within his territory during the 1880s, and estimates that by April 1888, Anato had acquired the equivalent of more than 100,000 francs in this manner.

15. This momentous decision, which was to have such a profound impact on the future of the Aluku, was handed down by the ruler of a country the Aluku did not even know existed, and who was probably equally ignorant of the Aluku territory. It was Tsar Alexander III who arbitrated in the border dispute.

16. It is interesting to note that previous to this time there was a fairly long history of competition between the Dutch and French for the loyalties of the Aluku. Even as the original treaty of 1860 was being negotiated, the Dutch were trying to woo the Aluku over to their side, so as to supplement the available labor force in their colony (De Groot 1977:77-81). The French, however, were from the first much more successful in winning them over, partly because the Aluku retained bitter memories – which, indeed, they continue to invoke even today – of the cruel treatment their ancestors received from their former Dutch masters. As Hoogbergen (1985:388) rightly states: “the chasm between the Aluku and the Dutch has never been closed” (“de kloof tussen Boni’s en Nederlanders is nooit gedicht”).

17. “Notre désir le plus ardent est de *rester français*...”

18. The dates of succession are taken from Hurault (1961:70) and Hoogbergen (1985:419). The kinship relationships are from oral tradition.

19. I am indebted to Wim Hoogbergen for generously sharing with me fragments of a number of contemporary Dutch archival documents (which he himself located) describing these transactions between Paramaribo and the Aluku following the death of Gaanman Anato.

20. In a letter dating from circa 1892, reprinted in Laporte (1983 [1915]:180-181) under the heading “Une Pétition d’un Grand-Man des Bonis,” the new paramount chief and several cosignatories (including the Yakobi *kapiten*, Bayo) tell of a recent visit to Kotika by a Dutch official. This official asked the Aluku to recognize Dutch sovereignty and to post the Dutch flag in their villages. If they refused, the official asserted, the people of Kotika would have to leave their village and go to the French side. The letter goes on to request that a stretch of land be set aside on the French side for the Alukus of Kotika.

21. “...la France ‘considère toujours les Bonis comme ses anciens enfants, quoique habitant sur une terre étrangère’...”

22. Ben Scholtens (pers. comm., June 29, 1989) informs me that archival documents show that Bayo was one of the main instigators of the great Ndjuka-Aluku boat strike of the early 1920s; as early as 1918 he had already begun to stop traffic on the Maroni, apparently in part because of the Suriname government's continuing refusal to inaugurate him as "kapitein." Bayo continues to be remembered by the present-day Aluku for his role in creating a *kunu* (avenging spirit) that still afflicts the Yakobi clan. He is said to have participated in the murder of a Creole gold prospector whose *yooka* (ghost) has since come back to haunt Bayo's matriclan.

23. Before Surinamese independence, Kotika had only one government-paid *kapiten* and two *basia*. The latter two were first given official recognition and government salaries in 1956. I am grateful to Ben Scholtens (pers. comm., June 19, 1989) for providing this information.

24. The second of the two paid *kapiten* positions in Kotika was created in 1975.

25. It is difficult to tell whether a comment made by Hurault about relations between Kotika and the other villages reflects an actual period of normalization during Gaanman Difu's reign or merely wishful thinking on the part of Hurault's informant(s): "this separation had no repercussions on the social life of the tribe, the people of Kotika continuing today to be subject to the authority of the grand man [*gaanman*] in the same way as the inhabitants of the other villages" ("cette séparation n'eut aucune répercussion sur la vie sociale de la tribu, les gens de Kotika continuant de nos jours à être soumis à l'autorité du grand man au même titre que les habitants des autres villages") (Hurault 1960:137). This characterization, in any case, hardly applies to the present situation. As we shall see, the persisting divisions and tensions between Kotika and all the other Aluku villages continue to play an important part in political and social life.

26. In the past a certain amount of intermarriage had occurred between members of the Aluku and Ndjuka Dikan clans (for instance, Gaanman Osii, who reigned 1891-1915, had a Ndjuka wife from the Dikan clan). There remain today in Aluku a few descendants of these marriages who, though Aluku in every other respect, are still identified with the Ndjuka Dikan clan rather than the Aluku one. The latter clan, the "true" Aluku Dikan *lo*, is said to have died out, Gaanman Difu having been the last surviving member.

27. See Hoogbergen (1985:419-420) on historical connections between the Aluku and Ndjuka Dikan clans. The account of the Dikan visitors from Benanu presented here is based on information provided by a number of Aluku elders who were present during the proceedings.

28. Interestingly, Sibour (1861:121), writing in the mid-19th century, notes that Tollinge (in some sources spelled "Tollenge" or "Tollenche") was called "Tonika" by the Maroons, indicating a pronunciation rather similar to today's "Tolinga." For further information on Tollenge's relationship with the Aluku and other Maroons, see Ronmy (1861) and Vidal (1862). See also De Groot (1977:68-81) for additional background on Tollinge.

29. Though a member of the Yakobi clan, Tutu resided for much of his life in Agoode (Boniville), Gaanman Difu's village. He also lived for many years in Saint-Laurent, where he served as a special *kapiten* whose job it was to represent those Aluku visiting or residing in the coastal area. (This special position was recognized by both the French and the Aluku

themselves.) Tutu is buried in the Saint-Laurent cemetery, where his grave marker bears a plaque which reads: "Ci-Gît Toutou, Adjoint au Grand Man, Capitaine des Bonis, Dcd le 24-9-63."

30. This account of the connection between Gaanman Difu's alleged selection of Tutu on the one hand, and the claims of Manto's supporters on the other, is based on Welles (1972), as well as the oral accounts of a number of Alukus from both Kotika and other villages.

31. By the 1970s, the position taken by the Kotika people – that Anato's precedent gave them a special right to the paramount chieftaincy – seems to have crystallized into the notion that there had always existed a customary pattern of exchange between the Dikan and Yakobi clans (Welles 1972). The idea, as explained to me by a number of Kotika people, is that the two clans were traditionally supposed to take turns, passing the office back and forth every few generations; now that the Dikan clan is extinct, this would mean, if the "rule" is to be followed, that the office would have to stay within the Yakobi clan forevermore.

32. The overlapping social ties created by the complexities of Aluku social organization and patterns of residence meant that segments of certain other clans also had reason to sympathize with Manto's supporters. For example, there is a section (*pisi*) of the village of Kotika today known as Komu Ondo. The residents of this section ("Komu Ondo sama"), though now closely identified with the Yakobi clan, are said to be descended from a woman of the Awaa Baka clan of Asisi, who settled in Kotika several generations ago and stayed to raise children there. Some people claim that Manto, though widely believed to be Yakobi, was in fact descended from "Komu Ondo sama," which helps to explain why a few Awaa Baka people were also to be found among his supporters.

33. There is evidence that the French occasionally intervened in the choice of paramount chiefs even during the period of indirect rule before the 1960s. Hurault (1961:71), for example, states that after the death of Gaanman Awensai in 1936, the first choice as his successor was an elder named Samalobi, but the French administration, believing Samalobi to be too old, exerted its influence in favor of Difu, the candidate who was eventually chosen. For a more recent discussion of French intervention in local political affairs among the Aluku, see Givens (1984:79-96). Price (1975:136-137) briefly discusses interference by Dutch colonial officials in Saramaka *gaamá* successions, as well as the factionalism and intrigue that have traditionally characterized the transmission of the Saramaka paramount chieftaincy. For a more detailed account of Saramaka *gaamá* succession, showing that the transfer of power in this society has often involved the same sorts of factors described in the present paper (rivalry between a number of clans, the temporary "lending" of the office by one clan to another, power plays and ideological justifications, intervention by the Dutch colonial government, and so forth), see Price (1989) (especially chapters 4 and 6, and note 1 of chapter 8, which contains a chart illustrating the passage of the office between clans over several generations). Hoeree and Hoogbergen (1984) present a detailed case study of interference by the Dutch colonial government in Saramaka *gaamá* succession. Thoden van Velzen (1966) deals in great detail with politics, including political succession, among the Ndjuka; and Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering (1988:307-315) provide an especially clear description of intervention by coastal politicians in the local affairs of the Ndjuka, during Gaanman Gazon's installation in the 1960s, shortly after Ndjukas gained the right to vote in national elections. De Groot (1969) also deals at length with calculated attempts by Dutch

authorities to meddle in Ndjuka social and political life. For a discussion of succession among the Matawai, see Anonymous (1916); and for a general overview of succession among various Maroon groups, see Wong (1938:327-348).

34. As part of the traditional ceremonies performed to install a new Aluku paramount chief, a special headman known as the *fisikali* – an office which is intermediate between that of paramount chief and village headman, and which has traditionally remained within the Dipelu clan – must “weti a gaanman” (coat the new paramount chief with *pemba doti*, white kaolin powder). According to custom, only the *fisikali* can carry out this ritual, which is essential to the legitimacy of a new *gaanman*. (A similar intermediate position called *fisikali* once existed among the Ndjuka, but has apparently disappeared [Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering 1988:426]; among the Aluku, the position of *fisikali* remains important to this day.) The *fisikali* at the time of the dispute chose to perform the ritual for Tolinga, and the Yakobi people, lacking the support of the Dipelu clan, were forced to “weti” Manto by themselves. This violation of propriety only added to the opprobrium felt by the other clans toward Manto and the Yakobi people for their attempt to usurp the paramount chieftaincy. (A few persons, either belonging to the Yakobi clan or with close ties to Kotika, denied in conversations with me that the Yakobi people had gone so far as to “weti” Manto on their own; but many others, affiliated with other clans, agreed with the version presented above.) Welles (1972) reports that Manto was formally installed as *gaanman* by the people of Kotika in February 1968, “with great ceremony.”

35. This theme of “two *gaanman*” has become incorporated into a parable I often heard repeated in the context of public meetings among the Aluku. As the story goes, God decided to “test” three of the Maroon tribes, the Saramaka, Ndjuka, and the Aluku, by presenting them with challenging situations. All three failed the “tests,” responding by making major “mistakes” that continue to haunt them to this day. The mistake of the Saramaka was in letting the dam be built which flooded a large part of their territory in the 1960s; the Ndjukas’ mistake was in letting the prophet Akalali burn their sacred shrines at Santi Goon; and the mistake of the Aluku was the fiasco of installing two *gaanman* at the same time.

36. The government’s offer, as Ben Scholtens (pers. comm., June 29, 1989) points out, was made even less appealing by the stipulation that the Aluku *hoofdkapitein* position would have to be placed under the authority of the Ndjuka *gaanman*. The mere thought of coming once again under Ndjuka rule was guaranteed to cause an instant negative reaction among the Aluku.

37. It was probably more than mere coincidence that the outcome of these elections hinged on the Maroon vote (Dew 1978: 171).

38. In a personal communication (June 29, 1989), Ben Scholtens reveals that a notice put out by the Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Distriktsbestuur in 1981 “refers to the issue of Manto and states that he was not recognized as granman because there are too few people living in Cottica [i.e. Kotika] and also because it would create a precedent in regard to the position of another small Bushnegro tribe, viz. the Coppename Kwinti.” The notice goes on to recommend that the number of *gaanman* recognized by the Suriname government not be increased from the four already existing. This recommendation was officially endorsed by the Alibux cabinet in a government declaration of May 1983.

39. This account of the dispute over the paramount chieftaincy following Gaanman Difu's death is based primarily on the memories of a number of Aluku witnesses who themselves participated in the events, as well as a number of Surinamese newspaper reports kindly made available to me by Wim Hoogbergen (from *Dagblad De West*, 1971-74). Robert Vignon, French Guiana's first prefect, and later a *conseiller général* – indeed, the same *conseiller général* who visited the Aluku during this period of transition – provides his own account of the events following Difu's death in his recently published memoirs (Vignon 1985: 227-232). His account includes a sketchy but revealing discussion of the dispute between Kotika and the other villages, with some background on the French intervention, in which he himself participated. (The title of Vignon's book, *Gran Man Baka* – an approximate rendering of the Aluku expression "gaanman fu bakaa," meaning "leader of the coastal people/Europeans" – is itself a reference to Vignon's long-term relations with the Aluku as colonial administrator and representative of the coastal society.) Although it is evident from his book that Vignon understood almost nothing of what was behind the dispute, the information he provides is nonetheless useful. It allows us to fill in the Aluku oral accounts with certain details, and serves to corroborate other details.

40. For discussions of the repeal of the "statut de l'Inini" and the subsequent creation of French communes in the interior, see Hurault (1972:300-337) and Hurault (1985). During the early years, the annual budget of the new commune of Grand-Santi-Papaïchton was no less than 36 million old francs (Hurault 1972:303). For a discussion of some of the effects felt in the 1980s, see Bilby (1987).

41. Some elders from clans other than Kawina deny this tradition of kinship between the Dikan and Kawina clans, averring that the first they ever heard of it was when Tolinga became *gaanman*, and insinuating that the story might have been invented by the Kawina people after the fact to support their claims to the office. Another way in which Kawina people seek to legitimize their claims to the paramount chieftaincy is by asserting that a previous chief, Gaanman Gongo, belonged to the Kawina clan, thus setting a precedent for the current situation. Both Hurault (1961: 71) and Hoogbergen (1985: 419) place Gaanman Gongo (who reigned from c. 1810 to 1840) in the Dikan clan, not the Kawina clan. Hoogbergen (pers. comm., April, 1989), however, has indicated to me that he was following Hurault when he placed Gaanman Gongo in the Dikan clan, and he doubts whether there exist any contemporary written records documenting what clan Gongo actually belonged to. In any case, recent major ethnographies (e.g., Price 1983, Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering 1988) make abundantly clear that this kind of manipulation of oral traditions in line with the interests of particular clans and lineages is a regular feature of social life in Surinamese Maroon societies. It should therefore come as no surprise that the various Aluku clans possess different and competing versions of certain oral historical traditions. Hoogbergen (1985: 438-439) provides one more such example from the Aluku, an earlier published version of an oral tradition asserting that two early important leaders, Boni and Aluku, originated from the same plantation, but that Boni was the first to escape. As Hoogbergen points out, since Boni is a Dikan ancestor, his ostensible earlier escape would serve to support the claims of the Dikan clan on the paramount chieftaincy. But as Hoogbergen goes on to note, Boni and Aluku, according to this particular version, had *wanted* to run away from the plantation *together*, although it did not happen this way; he thus surmises, very astutely, that this would seem to indicate that the anonymous source of the oral tradition was a member of the Yakobi clan, the clan to which Aluku belonged. Indeed, this oral tradition, by emphasizing both that Boni and Aluku were from the same plantation and

that they had *wanted* to run away at the same time, seems perfectly tailored to offer ideological support to the claims on the paramount chieftaincy that the Yakobi people have tried to assert ever since Anato's reign in the late 19th century.

42. For background on Tata Odun, see Hurault (1961: 195-198).

43. For background on *kunu*, see Price (1973), which focuses on the relationship between avenging spirits and lineage structure among the Saramaka Maroons, and Thoden van Velzen (1966), which does the same for the Ndjuka. Avenging spirits operate in very similar ways among the Aluku, Ndjuka, and Saramaka. Hurault (1961: 221-235) includes a problematic discussion of *kunu* among the Aluku.

44. Gaanman Tolinga visited Paris in 1971, where he was received by French president Georges Pompidou. It was shortly after this voyage that he founded a new Aluku village which he christened Pompidouville. The residents of the old Kawina village of Papai Siton (in French, "Papaïchton") followed Tolinga to Pompidouville. The name of the abandoned older village, however, continues to be applied at times to the new one, and has been retained as well in the name of the commune known as Grand-Santi-Papaïchton. On arriving at the village of Pompidouville, the first thing one sees is a large sign reading: "CAPITALE DES BONIS, POMPIDOU, PAPAI-CHTON." Interestingly, during Gaanman Anato's time, it was Kotika that was regarded by the Aluku as "*la capitale des Bonis*" (Brunetti 1890: 156).

45. More serious rumors also began to circulate during my stay. One of them, which was heard in only the most guarded, private contexts, held that certain Yakobi people were trying to get rid of Gaanman Tolinga, by means either of poison or sorcery. Interestingly, Vignon (1985: 232) was told during one of his visits to the Aluku that the son of Gaanman Awensai (a former paramount chief) – this son, it so happens, being Gaanman Tolinga's wife's brother – was poisoned by "le clan de Cottica" (i.e. the Yakobi clan of Kotika).

46. According to some versions, it was in fact the Paramaribo government that approached the Kotika people, offering them a special new position, in the hope that, as in the days of Manto, they might further their own political goals in the region.

47. The Aluku themselves refer to this position as *ofru-kapiten*, or *ofu-kapiten*.

48. The Dutch colonial government had several times before used this strategy to good effect among the Ndjuka, appointing individuals whose position they wished to strengthen to the same sort of intermediary post, between village headman and paramount chief in rank, thereby increasing their own influence among the Ndjuka. This intermediary position was called *ede kabiten* by the Ndjuka. Two prominent occupants of this office among the Ndjukaa were Kanapé, high priest of the Gaan Gadu oracle during the first half of the 20th century, and Akalali, the religious leader who transformed Ndjuka society during the 1970s (Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering 1988: 237; 346).

49. It was on October 1, 1983, that Peeti was inaugurated as *hoofdkapitein*.

50. In fact, before naming Peeti *hoofdkapitein*, the Paramaribo government had removed the earlier stipulation that would have placed this position under the Ndjuka *gaanman's*

authority. But suspicions remained high that the government was planning eventually to reverse itself and make Peeti subordinate to the Ndjuka *gaanman*.

51. *Aluku* is the name used by the Aluku to refer to themselves, when speaking their own language; it is also the term used by all the other Maroon groups to refer to the Aluku. Outsiders, however, and particularly the French, most often use the name *Boni* to refer to the Aluku (and until recently, the Aluku themselves, when speaking French or Creole, would refer to themselves as *Boni*).

52. Archival documents from the 18th century support these present-day oral traditions in several respects, indicating that the rebel leader named Aluku was born on a plantation in the Cottica River area called Groot-Marseille, the owner of which was named Jacobie, from whom the Yakobi clan took their name. This would seem strongly to support the claim that Tata Aluku was a founding member of the Yakobi *lo*. Furthermore, these archival documents indeed characterize Aluku unambiguously as a protector of women and children, who hid them away during times of crisis. See Hoogbergen (1985: 72-78; 405-406; 423).

53. In April 1989, Kapitein Peeti took it upon himself to inform several members of a visiting delegation from Cayenne, including the author, that the office of *gaanman* properly belongs to the Yakobi clan, to which it should have passed after Difu's death. Manto, he claimed, had been Gaanman Difu's chosen successor and the true paramount chief of the Aluku; but the paramount chieftaincy had unjustly been wrested from the Kotika people. According to Peeti, the treaty with the whites had actually been made by Anato, the Yakobi *gaanman*. Peeti claimed to be in possession of the original "pampila" (piece of paper) on which Anato's treaty was written, which he said had been passed on to him by Manto before his death, who had himself received it from Gaanman Difu. This was offered as proof that he, Peeti, had been chosen by Manto to succeed him as *gaanman*. Moreover, the Paramaribo government, he claimed, had already recognized him as the Aluku *gaanman*. (The official position of the Suriname government, however, is that Peeti is *hoofdkapitein*, not *granman*.) Peeti even went so far as to attend a formal meeting in Papai Siton between the visiting delegation and Gaanman Tolinga, where he raised this issue and invited the visitors to come to Kotika and see Anato's "pampila." This face-to-face confrontation took place at a time when hostilities between the Surinamese government and the Maroon rebels led by Ronnie Brunswijk remained unresolved, leaving the village of Kotika in a vulnerable position. The village was still cut off from the coast, and government services, including the salaries of village headmen, were still not reaching the interior. That Peeti would choose to continue pressing his claim at such an inopportune moment, when relations between the interior and Paramaribo were at an all-time low, indicates that the ongoing political dispute over the Aluku paramount chieftaincy has at least as much to do with the local history of clan rivalry as with the machinations of politicians in Paramaribo or Cayenne.

54. The Aluku, like the Saramaka (Price 1983) and other Suriname Maroons, are acutely conscious of living in time, and memories of the past, whether distant or more recent, continue to carry great importance and to inform political decision-making at all levels of their society. Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering (1988) do an excellent job of illuminating the historical continuity lying behind the many shifts in Ndjuka religious life, tracing a number of interconnecting threads over a period of nearly a century.

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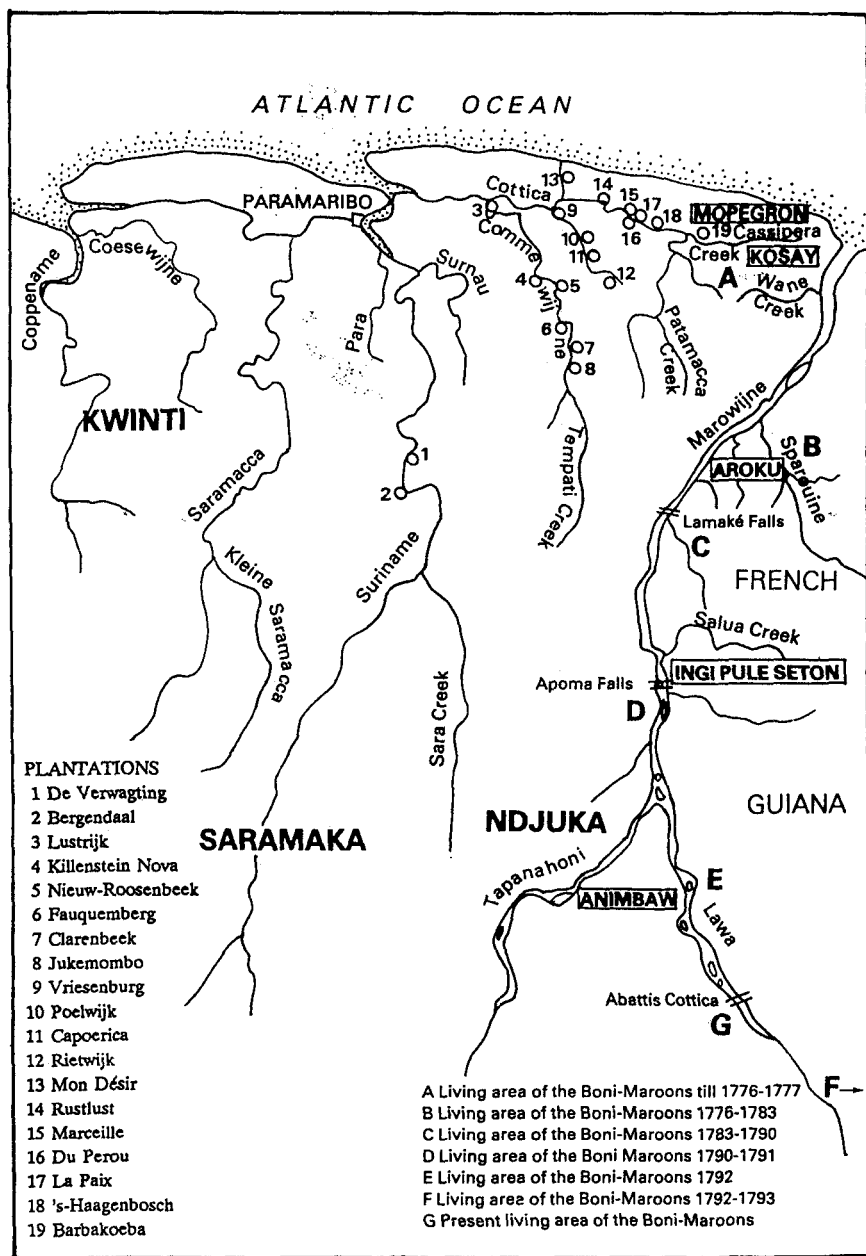
ALUKU

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the eighteenth century, a group of about 400 Maroons fought a series of protracted guerilla wars against the Dutch in Eastern Suriname.¹ These wars have been called 'The Boni-Maroon Wars', after Boni the principal rebel leader. In 1776-77 Boni and his allies fled to French Guiana, from where they resumed their battle against the planters in 1789. This marked the beginning of the second Boni-Maroon War. For the Boni, this second war came to a tragic end with the cruel death of both Boni and Kormantin Kodjo in 1793; another important headman, Aluku, had died the year before. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the surviving Maroons, about 100 in total, settled on the Lawa River in the surroundings of the 'Abattis Cottica' under the leadership of Boni's son Agosu. This region is still inhabited by their descendants.²

Several Maroons have gained fame in Suriname's history owing to their battles in the eighteenth century. John Gabriel Stedman (1796) already mentioned the names of Boni, Baron and Jolicoeur. The government's clerk Charles Brouwn, who published an obscure article on the Boni-Maroon Wars in the same year 1796, added other names including that of Aluku. The descendants of the Maroons who fought the Dutch two centuries ago, nowadays prefer to be called 'Aluku', as they claim they are all Aluku's descendants. The colonial authorities have long called them the 'Boni-Maroons'. It is only since the past few years that it has become more and more common, even in official documents, to refer to them as the 'Aluku-Maroons'.

Who was this Aluku, who must have been so important that the present Maroons prefer to trace their origins back to him?



In the autumn of 1961, the Surinamese newspaper *De West* published a series of articles on the early history of the Aluku-Maroons. The author was the Moravian brother Axwijk, who used the pseudonym 'Ajax', i.e. the god of war. Brother Axwijk, a Creole from the coastal zone, worked as a missionary-teacher among the Aluku and the Ndjuka-Maroons in the interior of Suriname from 1937 until 1960. During the 1950s he was a schoolteacher at Stoelman's Island. Axwijk must have gathered the information for his article among the Ndjuka and the Aluku-Maroons. Unfortunately, Axwijk's reconstruction of the early Aluku history is not very reliable. Without mentioning his sources, he made a compilation of the various stories he heard. Hence, we do not know *when* and *where* these stories were told. Other works on the oral tradition of the Maroons in Suriname (Pakosie 1972, De Groot 1982, Price 1983, Thoden van Velzen & Van Wetering 1988) make clear that the accounts with respect to a certain episode are always biased by the role played by a specific matriclan in a particular event. In other words, we must know when and by whom a story was told to be able to interpret it correctly. In Axwijk's case, it is not even clear whether the stories were told by the Ndjuka or by the Aluku-Maroons. Moreover, Axwijk probably added certain aspects to the story, thus exaggerating the events. Thus, some military operations are said to have cost the lives of hundreds of people, whereas the real number of victims could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Unreliable as Axwijk may be as a source, his story on the early Boni contains a number of interesting remarks. Besides, he is the only person who recorded the oral tradition with respect to Aluku. It is therefore definitely worth our while to analyze Axwijk's series of articles as published in 1961 and compare these to the oral tradition concerning the Aluku-Maroons as presented by others (Pakosie 1972, De Groot 1982a and Thoden van Velzen 1988). In addition, due to my research in the General State Archives in The Hague it is possible to compare the oral tradition with archival records. The present article intends to give a systematic outline of our present information on Aluku. Axwijk's version will serve as a starting-point. The other records introduced are not only meant to explain and correct Axwijk's account, but also – and in particular – to paint a picture of Aluku.

ALUKU ACCORDING TO AXWIJK

According to Axwijk, the history of the Aluku-Maroons begins on a nameless plantation in Suriname, where Boni and Aluku were both slaves belonging to the same callous master. One day, they decided to escape

the cruel slave system and start a new life in freedom in the almost inaccessible forests and swamps of Suriname.

When the day of their flight came closer, Boni began to doubt whether it was wise to flee together. A joint escape would mean that he would have to share the leadership with Aluku once they arrived in the jungle. This idea did not appeal to Boni at all. The difference in age between the two men was small and both of them had magic powers, although Aluku was slightly more powerful than Boni in this respect. In fact it was obvious that, if they fled together, Aluku would be the rightful leader. That was why Boni decided to leave the plantation without Aluku. He knew that Aluku would catch up with him later, but then he would be the first to have pitched camp and made a fire. According to the Maroon rules, he would thus be entitled to the leadership (Ajax 1961).

The first paragraphs of Axwijk's story focus on the central theme of the early history of the Boni: who was the first *gaanman* (paramount chief) and who was the most important leader in those early days: Boni or Aluku? Axwijk's spokesman was very clear on this: as for knowledge and authority Aluku was the natural leader, yet Boni became the first *gaanman* through guile.

One day, Boni fled alone. As a result, the plantation manager ordered to watch the slaves more closely. This made it all the more difficult for Aluku to follow Boni. Nevertheless, he went ahead with his plans and some time after Boni's flight Aluku escaped also. Boni covered up his escape-route so well that no ordinary mortal would be able to trace him, but thanks to his luku-obia, i.e. the magic power that enabled him to perceive the invisible, Aluku could easily follow Boni's track. He soon reached the place where Boni had pitched camp. Boni gave the newly-arrived a warm welcome and apologized for his sudden departure, while suggesting that they stay together in the house that he had built and prepare their meals on the fire that he had made. But Aluku was reluctant to accept the offer. He did not trust Boni and said that he would only stay for one night, as he intended to continue his journey the following morning. Boni did his utmost to persuade Aluku, but without success. Aluku left the following morning. He built a house of his own some hundred meters away from Boni's house. He wanted to live independently, so that his descendants could never blame him for the fact that he owed Boni gratitude for his hospitality. He wanted to prevent anyone from ever saying that Aluku had to accept Boni's fire to prepare a meal or to warm his cold body (Ajax 1961).

The message in the second passage of Axwijk's story is clear. As Boni had been the first to find a hiding-place in the jungle, he had become the leader of the two. But as Aluku refused to join Boni, the natural leader of the two retained his freedom and became the headman of his own group. Consequently, Aluku's descendants do not owe any respect to the descendants of Boni. The present Aluku-Maroons stress the fact

that the group as a whole descends from Boni and Aluku. The number of people who claim descent from Boni, however, is relatively small and is restricted to the Dikan-lo, a group that has almost died out. All other matrilineal groups are said to be descending from Aluku. I will return to this later.

Boni and Aluku continued to live at a considerable distance from each other. After some time, they were no longer alone, as they had gathered a small community around them. The people who had joined Boni, however, were to be pitied for their leader appeared to be as heartless as any slave owner. It did not take long before Boni's allies started to decrease significantly in number. These poor and helpless people were even worse off than the slaves on the plantations. Nobody was sure of his life. One day, when Boni cut off someone's ear after some minor offence, Aluku intervened. He also assumed power over Boni's group, which Boni accepted. This was the beginning of a time of peace and quiet for everyone. The time of prosperity lasted until Aluku's death. That was when Boni took over the lead again and built a settlement near Saroua, not far away from the Apoma Falls on the Marowijne River (Ajax 1961).

This is the last reference to Aluku in Axwijk's story. Boni could once again act as a tyrant. As an offering to his gods, he killed a young boy each month. This only came to an end when one of the prospective victims, called Agosu,³ trapped Boni and killed him. Agosu then assumed power over the Maroons.

Axwijk's story contains three main elements. First he tries to answer the question of how the Aluku-Maroon tribe was formed. One day, two slaves from the same plantation escaped. These two people competed for power over the group of Maroons who had gathered around them. The second outstanding element in Axwijk's story is Boni's cruelty. Does this reflect an oral tradition generally referring to atrocities committed by the early Maroon leaders? The third element that I would like to discuss with respect to Axwijk's story is the formation of the clans among the Aluku-Maroons. Axwijk simplified this matter by stating that any Aluku-Maroon who was not a direct descendant of Boni's could not be but one of Aluku's. The genesis of this Maroon tribe, however, was far more complex. Before discussing these three matters in detail, I will first describe the information about Aluku as presented in books and archives.

THE INFORMATION ABOUT ALUKU IN BOOKS AND ARCHIVES

As opposed to Boni, whose name is frequently mentioned in the archives, Aluku is only five times referred to in archival records: in 1769, 1776, 1782, 1790 and 1792. In the archives, the man who is known as Aluku in the oral tradition, is either referred to as 'Aluku' or as 'Askaan van Marceille' (Askaan from the plantation Marceille). It will soon become clear that these names refer to the same person. Also, the works published in the eighteenth and nineteenth century rarely refer to Aluku. As we saw, John Gabriel Stedman's book (1796) on the Boni-Maroon Wars does not even make mention of Aluku at all.

John Gabriel Stedman (1744-1797) arrived in Suriname in 1773. He was an officer under Colonel Fourgeoud, the commander of an army of about 1500 mercenary soldiers who fought the Boni-Maroons in the Cottica area from 1773 until 1777. During his stay of over four years in Suriname, Stedman kept a diary, which he later used as a starting-point for what was to become the most famous book on Suriname. It was published in 1796 by Johnson of London under the title *Narrative of a five years' expedition against the revolted Negroes in Surinam* and became an instant success.⁴ An important part of Stedman's work describes the war against the Boni-Maroons during the period 1773-1777. According to Stedman, the Boni-Maroons were led by Baron, Boni and Jolicoeur (in this order). Although Stedman never mentioned Aluku's name in his work, during his stay in Suriname the Court of Policy in Paramaribo was aware of the fact that the 'rebels' in the Cottica area had two leaders, Boni and Aluku. The archives contain two important reports (from 1769 and 1776) which make this clear.

It was on 30 January 1769 that a group of Maroons attacked the plantation Rustlust, situated on the northern bank of the Cottica River. Both *burghers* and soldiers set off in pursuit of the raiders. They found an abandoned Maroon-village of 30 houses, where they left a small garrison behind. On 20 February some soldiers discovered a path which led east-southeast. As they proceeded on this path the following day, they found large provision grounds laid out by the Maroons. The fields were planted with tayers [xanthosoma], plantains, manioc and peanuts. The soldiers also found a grey-haired old man sitting near a hut. He was accompanied by a woman and a child. The old man declared that his name was Asikan. He appeared to be the chief of a group of about 400 Maroons. He told the soldiers that he had lived in the Cottica area for more than 50 years. Hardly had he arrived in Suriname when he escaped from his plantation and settled in this marshland. Through the years a small tribe had gathered around him. As the Maroon leader was old and dying, he had already transferred his power to the former slave Askaan of the plantation Marceille, and to Boni, a *Bosch Creool* [bush creole], whose mother was a slave who had fled from the plantation of Barbakoeba.⁵

If, by 1769, it was generally known in Paramaribo that the Maroons in the Cottica region were led by Askaan (from Marceille) and the *Bosch Creool* Boni, why then was Stedman writing about the triumvirate Baron, Boni and Jolicoeur? In 1773, when Stedman arrived in the colony, both Baron and Jolicoeur belonged to the group of Maroons around Aluku and Boni, but they were not leaders at all. Jolicoeur was even a fairly recent Maroon. He had been a slave on the plantation Fauquemberg. On New Year's Day 1772 he had fled from his plantation together with eight other people. The runaways managed to reach Buku, which was the most important Maroon village of the Cottica region in those days. Five months later, on 28 May 1772, the Maroons attacked the plantation Nieuw-Roosenbeek, which lay next to the plantation Fauquemberg. They were instigated and helped by the slaves who had escaped on that particular New Year's Day. They caught the manager of Fauquemberg and Nieuw-Roosenbeek – a man called Schültz – and decided to shoot him. According to Stedman, Schültz appealed to Jolicoeur, whom he had recognized among the raiders. He begged for mercy, but Jolicoeur did not feel sorry for his former master who had raped his mother and tortured his father. On the contrary, he took an axe and killed him. The Maroons who were questioned about this murder after their arrest in 1773 and 1776, told a somewhat different story. They declared that Schültz had been shot by Boni because he refused to tell him where the gunpowder stock was hidden (Hoogbergen 1985b: 85). Jolicoeur was killed in 1773 or 1774. There is no reason to believe that he was a Maroon-leader during his relatively short stay with this tribe.

Baron's role was more important. He was one of Boni's subchiefs for some time. Baron had been the slave of a planter called Dahlberg. The exact date of Baron's flight to the Maroons is not known, but his name appears in the archives after the attack on Rustlust, together with the names of Boni and Askaan. Baron took part in this attack, in which he was injured. The sources further reveal that Baron frequently clashed with Boni, as he found it difficult to submit himself to the authority of the latter. Owing to these conflicts, Baron and his companions usually stayed at some distance from the villages in which Aluku and Boni resided. The two groups only joined forces while on plundering expeditions. An attack in the Patamacca area in July 1774 proved fatal to Baron, who was shot by slaves (Hoogbergen 1985b: 82-3). Thus, both Baron and Jolicoeur had been killed before John Gabriel Stedman left Suriname in 1777. This shows that the Scottish captain was not familiar with all the details with respect to his enemies, which is, of course, not surprising.

Nor did Stedman have a clear idea of the internal structure of the Maroon

community in the Cottica area. Some people played a more important role here than Baron and Jolicoeur did. First of all there was, of course, Askaan from Marceille. Other sources have revealed that Askaan was called 'Aluku' by the Maroons, which means 'seer' ('luku' = to look). As mentioned before, Askaan (Aluku) apparently held such an important position that his descendants nowadays prefer to call themselves Aluku-Maroons. But even Kormantin Kodjo, Puja (from the plantation La Paix), Sambokwasi and Basa (from the plantation Clemensburg) appeared to have been more important in this early Maroon society than Baron and Jolicoeur.⁶ Even the position of Boni himself has never been properly assessed by Stedman. This is largely due to the fact that Stedman actually does not tell us more than what he experienced himself or what he had got from hearsay. Apparently he never read any of the reports drawn up by the commanders of the army, nor did he hear any of the testimonies of the captive Maroons. Especially the testimony given in 1776 by someone called Jonas of 's-Haagenbosch provides ample information on the life of the Maroons in the Cottica area during the period under discussion.⁷ It is this testimony that constitutes the second reference to Aluku.

When Jonas was a little boy, he was abducted from the plantation 's-Haagenbosch by the Boni-Maroons, who attacked this small plantation in February 1771. For five years he lived in the village of Boni, who was very fond of him and designated him his *futuboy* (helper). Boni took the boy with him on his wanderings across the savannah and had him looking after his wife whenever he went out fishing.

As far as Aluku is concerned, Jonas only reported that Askaan was an old man. He called him Boni's 'stepfather'. Aluku and Boni had split tasks between them. Boni was the leader of the men who waged the guerilla-war against the Dutch, whereas Aluku was responsible for the women and children. This division of tasks is illustrated by Jona's report concerning the attack on the plantation Groot-Marceille on 4 May 1774. There was a special link between this plantation and some of the Boni-Maroons. Many slaves who had joined the Boni – among whom the chiefs Aluku and Suku – came from Marceille. One of the present matrilineal clans of the Aluku, i.e. the Yakubi-lo, has been named after Jacobij, the owner of Marceille from 1731 until 1742.⁸

Nevertheless, solidarity was hard to find on the evening of 4 May. The slaves grabbed their guns and started to shoot at the invaders. They shouted at the Maroons that ransacking their plantation would not be a simple task. After a quarter of an hour the Maroons realized that they would never win the battle and retreated. They took advantage of the confusion to abduct twelve slaves. Their journey home first led

to the North up to the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean and then went on eastwards. After several days the Maroons arrived at their villages, which had been abandoned. According to Jonas from 's-Haagenbosch, Aluku had brought the women and children to a place of refuge. The Maroons decided not to bring back the women and children immediately, as they first wanted to see whether they had indeed misled their pursuers.⁹

The third archival reference concerning Aluku dates from 1782. It was in this year that the authorities in Paramaribo interrogated a runaway slave who had regularly visited the villages of the Boni-Maroons, and who now resided on the Sparouine River in French Guiana. The man told that all the Boni-Maroons lived together in one village, spread over four quarters. One of those quarters was controlled by 'Boni, his father Aluku and his son Agosu'.¹⁰ In 1790, during the second Boni-Maroon War, the soldier Von Sidow compiled a list of all Boni-Maroon chiefs. Askaan was on top of Von Sidow's list. He was said to be *Bonnie's vader* (father).¹¹

The importance of Aluku is also clearly illustrated by the names of several Maroon villages. In the archives the village Kosay, an important settlement in the Cottica area which had been discovered by a patrol in 1768, is also referred to as *Luka*. The village built by the Boni-Maroons in 1777 on French territory along the Sparouine River is called *Gadogron* or *Aluku*. The conglomeration of Boni-villages near the Lamaké Falls, where the Boni-Maroons lived from circa 1785 to 1790, is designated *Arokoe* in the archives. The area on the Lawa River, south of the Abattis Cottica Falls, where the Maroons resided in the nineteenth century, is once again referred to as *Aluku* in the archives. In fact, most documents refer to the people as the 'Boni-Maroons', whereas their living-area is called 'Aluku'.

The fifth and last reference to Aluku dates from 1792. Late February 1792 a Dutch military patrol went on an expedition to the Lawa River in search of the new Boni-villages. The patrol discovered a small village on an island in the Lawa River, where they captured some Maroons. The captives told the soldiers that there were more villages nearby and that a lot of Boni-Maroons had gathered 'to throw water on Askaan's death, the father of Boni'.¹² 'To throw water on someone's death', i.e. 'towee wataa' in the Maroons' language, is a religious custom which is still in use among the Maroons in Suriname.¹³ It forms part of the funeral rites. When someone dies, the Maroons make libations to facilitate the dead person's transition to the next world.

The archives do not mention any conflicts between Boni and Aluku such as are suggested by Axwijk's version of the oral tradition. The impression created by the records is rather one of a harmonious diarchy in which Aluku looked after the women and children. He probably figured

as a kind of peace chief dealing with internal matters, whereas Boni occupied himself with warfare. It requires a really thorough examination of the archives to obtain a clear picture of Aluku. Perhaps due to his particular role, the Dutch were hardly aware of his existence. The history of the Boni-Maroons as represented by the archives focuses on the Boni-Maroon Wars (1768-1777 and 1789-1793). The soldiers' reports rarely contain any information on the internal structure of Boni-Maroon society.

THE GENESIS OF THE BONI-MAROONS ACCORDING TO THE ARCHIVES

The oral tradition as presented by Axwijk suggests that the struggle between Boni and Aluku culminated before the Boni-Maroons settled in French Guiana, for it was only after Aluku's death that the Boni settled in 'Saroua near the Apoma Falls' on the Marowijne River' (Ajax 1961). The Apoma Falls are situated somewhat North of the region of Ingi Pule Seton, where the Boni-Maroons lived from May 1790 till August 1791 (Hoogbergen 1985b: 293-324). From circa 1770 till 1792, one of Boni's *kabiten* (chiefs),¹⁴ Koki, resided in the vicinity of these falls on the Saluakreek. The notion that Aluku died before Boni settled in the Saroua region contradicts the archives on two points. In the first place, Aluku was still alive when the Boni-Maroons resided in the region of Ingi Pule Seton and secondly, Boni himself never lived on the Saluakreek.

It is of little use to compare Axwijk's oral tradition with the archival reconstruction of the early history of the Boni-tribe. Axwijk's story remains silent on the first Boni-Maroon War (1768-77). Further, Axwijk refers to the Boni-Maroons entering into contact with the Ndjuka. This contact almost immediately resulted in a war between the Ndjuka and the Boni-Maroons. Thanks to the archives we know that this war lasted from 1792 until 1793 and ended with Boni's death (De Groot 1980, Hoogbergen 1985b: 241-47 and 325-59). Axwijk's references to Aluku are of little value to us. We are eagerly waiting better information provided by the oral tradition. For the time being, the story of Aluku and the genesis of the Boni-Maroon tribe have to be based primarily on archival data. The preceding paragraph already sketched the broad outlines of this story. The details are as follows.

The classic works on the history of Suriname (Hartsinck 1770 and Nassy 1788) do not make mention of any Maroons in the Cottica region. From the archival references of 1769 we have learned that the first Boni-Maroons settled in the Cottica area in 1712. Their chief Asikan-Silvester, who was taken prisoner in 1769, declared upon his arrest that he had fled to the jungle when the French invaded Suriname. That is about the only

information available with respect to the origins of the Boni-tribe. In the days of Governor Karel E.H. de Cheusses (1728-1734) a number of military expeditions were mounted against the Maroons in the Cottica region.¹⁵ Ten years later, in 1744, the archives refer to a patrol in the Cottica area again. A village was found behind the plantation Vriesenburg, which was inhabited by 25 Maroons.¹⁶ Early in January 1746, a captive Maroon showed a patrol the way to a large Maroon settlement situated between the Cottica and Marowijne Rivers. The patrol captured thirteen people, among whom a brother and a sister of Boni.¹⁷ It is not known whether Boni himself, who was about fifteen years old by then, was absent when the patrol invaded his village or whether he managed to escape. The information from 1746, however, makes clear that a 'Boni family' had been formed in the village. In 1776 Jonas of 's-Haagenbosch, whose account generally is very reliable, told that Boni had been born in the forest and that his mother had been a slave from the plantation Barbakoeba, belonging to the planter De Mey. By 1776 Boni's mother and his biological father had already died. As mentioned before, Jonas also declared that Askaan of Marceille (Aluku) was Boni's stepfather. It therefore becomes very likely that Aluku played an important part in Boni's upbringing and that he must have belonged to the group of Maroons in the Cottica area long before 1744. As opposed to Boni, Aluku was not born among the Maroons but on a plantation (the plantation Marceille), or perhaps in Africa.

Until 1760, the patrols were not a serious threat to the Cottica-Maroons. The planters mostly directed their actions against larger groups of Maroons (the Ndjuka and Saramaka), who lived south of the plantation area. Peace treaties signed in 1760 (with the Ndjuka) and in 1762 (with the Saramaka), however, put an end to these wars. From then on, the colonial troops turned all their attention towards the non-pacified Maroons living west (the Kwinti or Kofimaka) and east (the Boni-Maroons) of the plantation area.

In February 1762, a patrol discovered a Maroon settlement near the Cassipera Creek. At the patrol's arrival, the village – called *Mopegron* in the archival records – was found deserted. In their great haste, the Maroons had left large quantities of food behind (Hoogbergen 1985b: 87-9). Mopegron was only a relatively small village. Six years later, three larger villages were discovered. One of these villages was called *Kosay* (or *Luku*) and consisted of 32 houses, some of which were very large. There was also a smithy in the village. The patrol further found brass lamps, iron utensils, more than 200 water pots, pipes, hammocks and almost 700 chickens.¹⁸

The seizure and destruction of what must have been the three most

important villages was a turning-point in the relationship between these Maroons and the planters. It was clear that a well-organized society had been set up in the Cottica area. Such a viable Maroon settlement near the plantations could well lead to massive slave desertions, as it offered the slaves a way of living in freedom. From the discovery of *Kosay* onwards, the planters started continually to hunt the Maroons in the Cottica area. The Maroons, for their part, started to launch regular attacks on the plantations. This marked the beginning of the Boni-Maroon Wars, which lasted from 1768 till 1777 and from 1789 till 1793. (For detailed accounts, see De Groot (1975), De Beet (1984) and Hoogbergen (1984, 1985b, 1988, 1989 and 1990). In 1772, the Boni-Maroons even managed to withstand a months-long siege which had been laid by the planters to their village *Buku*. In order to reinforce the colonial troops, a separate army corps of 300 members was formed from among the slave population, the *Redimusu* (Black Rangers). In addition, about 1500 European mercenary soldiers were recruited under the leadership of Colonel Louis Henry Fourgeoud. While all these military did not succeed in beating the Boni-Maroons, their continued persecution led the Boni to move to French Guiana in 1776-77. In 1789 they resumed their battle against the Surinamese planters. One year later the Dutch seized their villages on the Marowijne River. In 1791-92 the Boni were driven further south towards the region of the Ndjuka-Maroons. Due to a clever policy of the Dutch, the pacified Ndjuka finally sided with the planters against their natural allies, the Boni. Early in 1792 Aluku died. The Boni-Maroons had already settled on the lower Lawa River by then. Half a year later, Boni's son Agosu attacked the Ndjuka village Animaw. In February 1793, a counterexpedition of the Ndjuka discovered the new villages of the Boni on the Marouine River, a tributary of the Lawa River. Boni was killed and beheaded by the Ndjuka. Agosu, however, managed to escape.

BONI'S CRUELTY

As we saw, Axwijk's story highlights Boni's cruelty, whereas the archives do not refer to this. In effect, they rather point in the opposite direction. In the archives Boni is represented as a sensible leader who was a real master in settling internal disputes, mainly by allowing people to act as they thought fit. Whoever dissociated himself from Boni's authority, was free to leave and settle somewhere else or stay in the group and suit himself. There was no obligation to join military expeditions to the plantation area, whereas, on the other hand, some attacks on plantations were launched without Boni's consent.

Where do these stories about Boni's cruelty come from? Maybe the storyteller needed them to enhance Aluku's image introducing a polarization of hero and villain. The archives allow, however, for a different conclusion. A group of Maroons led by a certain Kwami lived in the Patamacca area, independently from Boni and Aluku. In 1770 a group of 22 Maroons left Boni and Aluku to join Kwami. In May 1773, a patrol under the leadership of lieutenant Lepper discovered Kwami's village. Most Maroons had been able to escape in time. One year later Colonel L.H. Fourgeoud seized *Kwaamikondre*, but the village had once again been abandoned. Subsequently, the Maroons of Kwami fled to Boni and Aluku. After some time they built a new village in the area between the Patamacca and Peninica Creeks under the leadership of Kwami. His Maroon group, however, fell apart shortly afterwards because of serious disputes. Kwami launched accusations of witchcraft at all his fellow-Maroons. Within a short period, he ordered 28 of his fellow-villagers killed. Only eight people survived. The survivors called on Boni, with whose help they managed to kill Kwami. The few remaining people then joined Boni and Aluku (Hoogbergen 1985b: 128-30).

In oral tradition, discussions and stories about the origins of a Maroon tribe always appear to be centered around three major epics. These are: life in Africa, the period of slavery in Suriname, and the escape from the plantations. Axwijk's account deals with the third period: *lowéten* (the runaway time). This episode features tales of the great *lowéten* figures, but the stories also tell us of deprivation, danger, and hardship. In the history of another Maroon tribe – the Paramaka – we find in oral history the same dichotomy between the wise founding father and the evil ancestor as in Axwijk's story. In Paramaka history the hero-warrior is Boni (our Boni), whereas Hendrick Amawie personifies the evil ancestor, who used his magic power to make trouble and even kill other Maroons (Lenoir 1973: 66-73). In oral history a structural principle may be discerned which clusters around a restricted number of dramatis personae the events of a large period, and which attributes to them the characters of many people. Thus, the cruel picture of Boni in Axwijk's story may find its origins in the attribution of various events from the early history of the tribe, such as Kwami's killings, to Boni himself. Contrary to Axwijk's assumption, the tribe had more than two founders. From time to time, the tribe was enlarged by groups of Maroons who had been living independently for a considerable time, such as the Maroons under the leadership of Sam-bokwasi, Kormantin Kodjo, Basa of Clemensburg, Koki and Kwami. The names of these persons have not survived in the oral tradition, yet their feats are still narrated, attributed to others.

In fact, the oral tradition according to Axwijk actually refers to two people called Boni. Axwijk relates how Boni was killed by the young Agosu, whom he later calls Agosu-Boni (or Boni II) in his story. Agosu-Boni had a son who remained unnamed and is plainly referred to as 'Agosu's son'. He invaded the important Ndjuka-village Puketi. If one replaces Axwijk's first Boni by Kwami, Agosu-Boni by Boni and 'Agosu's son' by Agosu, the story comes much closer to the archival version as far as the characters are concerned: the archives refer to Kwami being killed by Boni, to Boni as the sympathetic leader and to Agosu as the reckless warrior who launched an ill-considered attack on Animbaw, the main residence of the Ndjuka.

Pakosie (1972: 3-13) presents a version of oral history current among the Ndjuka. He mentions two men called Boni: Boni Amusu and his foster son Boni Okilifu.¹⁹ Boni Amusu was the clever guerilla-leader who started the war against the Dutch, whereas Okilifu was the man who fought the Ndjuka. He attacked Animbaw, the main settlement of the Ndjuka, and was killed and beheaded by this tribe. Pakosie does not mention Aluku and Agosu. Boni Amusu is the personification of the heroic achievements of Asikan-Silvester, Aluku and Boni, whereas the 'evil' aspect of the feats of Boni and Agosu are partly attributed to Boni Okilifu.

MATRILINEAL ORGANIZATION

The most important structural principle in the social organization of the Maroons is matrilinearity. Matrilineage is called *bee* (womb) among the Maroons. The expression 'people of one bee' refers to relatives who are genealogically related and whose origins can be clearly traced back to one ancestress. Among the larger Maroon tribes, a number of *bee* coalesce into one matriclan. According to the oral tradition, each matriclan is formed by a particular group of runaway slaves from a particular plantation or group of plantations, after which they have been named. These matriclans are called *lo*, a very old word derived from the English word 'row'. In the English-based Creole of Suriname it meant: group, gang.

The Aluku do not make a distinction between *lo* and *bee*. The clan is not composed of a number of matrilineages. Each *bee* is a *lo* at the same time. According to Hurault (1961: 19), the Aluku consist of seven *lo* and some smaller matrigroups. The latter are potential clans, although they are still small in number because, according to the oral tradition, the ancestresses only joined the Aluku about a century ago. Some of these lineages are called *bakabuchi* by Hurault, which is the term used by the

pacified Maroons for the non-pacified runaways who fled later and wandered around the forests in small groups.

Already during the Maroon Wars the term *lo* was used by the groups who considered themselves a unity. In those days, the word must have had another meaning than 'group of matrilineal kin', because most members of the *lo* were not related to one another. Rather, the group was held together either by its common tribal origins, which could be traced back to Africa, or by the plantation from which the slaves had fled.

A striking aspect of the early history – until circa 1820 – of the Boni-Maroons is the continuous relocation of this developing society. The Boni-Maroons were forced to relocate every other year because of the armies which chased them. This meant that they had to build up adequate foodstocks in time. In retrospect, it is really astounding that the tribe managed to survive in such a hostile environment. Another striking feature of those early days was that women were largely outnumbered by men.²⁰ Often, the sole objective of the marauding expeditions to the plantations was the abduction of women. The men in the Maroon villages took good care of their women. In times of war, the women used to stay behind in the villages. Whenever the Maroon settlements were in danger, the women and children moved to safer places. As mentioned before, Aluku was responsible for this operation. The men used to stay behind to wage war. Whenever they went marauding the plantations, they would leave their village, sometimes for months, while loitering behind the plantations to steal goods or to keep in contact with the slaves. The men did not feel obliged to stay with one and the same group. Whenever one could not get along with the group's other members, one joined another group or broke away. The more fixed abode of the women as compared to the men presumably resulted in the formation of a matrilocal system.

The history of the Boni-Maroons begins somewhere in Africa. During the period of slavery, the Dutch transported about 325,000 slaves from West-Africa to Suriname. Johannes Postma (1970-72, 1975) has analyzed the role of the Dutch in the slave trade. He made clear that in the course of the eighteenth century, there was a shift in the regions from where the Dutch imported their slaves. Before 1725, half of the Surinamese slave contingent came from the Slave Coast (Nigeria and Cameroon). Afterwards – and this is of interest to us, as most of the Boni-Maroons only arrived in Suriname after 1725 – the supply area gradually moved to the North. In the period 1736-1795, almost fifty percent of the slaves came from the regions of Sierra Leone and Senegambia. These slaves were called *Gangu* in Suriname. A quarter of the slaves came from the Gold Coast (Ghana), i.e. the so-called *Kormantins*, and another quarter came from Loangu-Angola. The latter were called *Loangu* in Suriname.

In the early history of the Boni, the Maroons frequently managed to organize according to their ethnic origins. The archives contain various examples of this. When the Ndjuka-Maroons declared war upon the Tesis-Maroons²¹ in 1771, they heard that one of the Tesis-villages was inhabited by *Gangu*.²² Another example: in February 1772, a number of slaves deserted from the plantation Lustrijk. After several days, the fugitives encountered *Komantins*, who belonged to the Maroons of Kormantin Kodjo.²³ The latter refused to help the runaways, as they were convinced that shortly before the slaves from Lustrijk had shown a patrol the way to their village. But the runaways from Lustrijk argued that it had been *Loangu*²⁴ who had shown the soldiers the way. In July 1773 the runaway Sander van Hooyland declared that Kormantin Kodjo's village was inhabited by *Kormantins* and *Gangu* only.²⁵ As for Boni, who was a Bush Creole, a captive Maroon declared in 1791 that Boni did not trust the *Luangu*.²⁶

The archives do not contain any information on the ethnic background of Aluku. It is not known whether Aluku was born in Africa or whether he was a *Creole*, i.e. born in Suriname. It is rather likely, however, that Aluku had not been born among the Maroons. For he was never referred to as a *Bosch Creool* (Bush Creole), which was the common term used for the Maroons who were not born on plantations but in the forest (*het bosch*).

The history of the Boni-Maroon Wars makes clear that the Boni were recruited from many different plantations. The slaves usually fled in small groups. It only rarely happened that a large number of slaves from one and the same plantation joined the group of Maroons. If so, this was mostly due to an attack. The raids that resulted in the most massive escapes were the ones on Nieuw-Roosenbeek, Poelwijk and La Paix in 1772, on Du Perou, De Suynigheid and Nouvel-Espérance in August 1773, on Killenstein Nova in 1775, and on Clarenbeek and four plantations in the upper Suriname region in 1789. Table 1 lists the attacks that yielded the largest number of new Maroons during the Boni-Maroon Wars.

The slaves in Suriname used the name of their plantation or their owner as a family name, a custom which was maintained by the Maroons. Of all seven *lo* known by the Boni at present, only two clannames refer to these plantations attacked. The origin of the name 'Lapé-lo' can be traced back to the plantation La Paix, and the 'Dipelu-lo' refers to the plantation Du Perou. However, this does not prove that the slaves from these plantations generally stayed together as a separate group, for it was not the number of slaves in general that determined the naming, but the number of women, because the children were named after their mother's plantation. In 1772, 30 women and six children were abducted from La Paix. A large

TABLE 1: RAIDS ON PLANTATIONS AND THE NUMBER OF SLAVES ABDUCTED

Year	Plantation attacked	Number of slaves abducted
1765	Jukemombo	17
1766	Rietwijk	55
1770	Mon Désir	16
1771	Capoerica	12
1772	La Paix	15
	Lustrijk	19
	Nieuw-Roosenbeek	50
	Poelwijk	70
	La Paix	58
	Mon Désir and Clemensburg	23
1773	De Suynigheid, Du Perou and Nouvel-Espérance	52
1774	De Verwagting	12
1775	Killenstein Nova	33
1776	Bergendaal	16
1789	Clarenbeek	33
	Four plantations in the Upper Suriname area	100

number of them returned to their plantation after the seizure of Buku some months later, yet the origins of the Lapé-lo can easily be traced back to the eighteenth century. Archival documents make clear that from 1777 onwards, there was a Boni-village which was inhabited by people who mainly came from the plantation La Paix.

As for the origins of the Dipelu-lo, one may assume that the attacks on the plantations Du Perou, De Suynigheid and Nouvel-Espérance resulted in many women fleeing to the Boni-Maroons. Owing to the matrilineal nomenclature, the Dipelu-group quickly increased in number. Unfortunately, this assumption cannot be verified, as there is no information available on the proportion of male and female slaves who were abducted in 1773.

As for the other clans, tracing their origins is even more difficult, if not impossible.²⁷ Especially the origins of the Dikan-lo and the Yakubi-lo leave us with many unanswered questions. A report dated September 1771 makes mention of a large number of women from the plantations Lunenburg, Rustlust and Mon Désir (Hoogbergen 1985b: 146-48) among the inhabitants of Buku. Yet none of these names are found among the present clan-names of the Boni.

According to oral tradition, the *gaanman* of the Aluku are recruited from the Dikan-lo. Apparently this also applied to Boni and Agosu. The Ndjuka-Maroons incorporate a clan with the same name, which forms an important *lo* within this tribe. In 1790, the Dikan clan-chief Kwamina Adjubi was related to both Boni's family and to Kormantin Kodjo's. In the archives, he even is called Boni's 'father-in-law'.²⁸ This explains how the Ndjuka-Dikan women ended up with the Boni-Maroons. Assuming that these women gave birth to female children, it also explains the name Dikan-lo within the Boni-clan. When, in 1967, the Aluku Dikan-lo could not provide a successor for Difu, the Ndjuka Dikan-lo put forward various people who qualified for the position of *gaanman* of the Aluku.²⁹

Kenneth M. Bilby (NWIG, this issue) analyzes the difficulties with respect to the succession of *gaanman* Difu, who died in 1967. The *gaanman* of the Aluku Maroons traditionally belong to the Dikan-clan. According to oral tradition, this was the clan of the important guerillaleader and *gaanman* Boni. The Dikan-clan gradually decreased in number. Twice in the nineteenth century there was no successor available within this matrigrup to succeed the *gaanman*. On both occasions the Yakubi-lo had to provide a paramount chief (Atiaba 1870-76 and Anato 1876-1891). With the appointment of Osji in 1891 the function of *gaanman* returned to the Dikan-lo. But when Difu died, there was once again no male successor available, and again the Yakubi-clan claimed to provide the paramount chief again, in the person of *kabiten* (headman) Manto. Since the last century, however, the Yakubi-lo has lost much of its prestige within the Aluku-community as a whole. As pointed out by Bilby, this may be largely attributed to the fact that this matrigrup moved to Dutch territory by the end of the nineteenth century, whereas the other matriclans remained living on French territory. As the Aluku-Maroons were divided among themselves with regard to the succession of Difu, the French could put forward their protégé, Tolinga of the Kawina-lo, the mayor of Papaiston. Tolinga was finally recognized as the new *gaanman* by all clans, with the exception of the Yakubi, and his inauguration was ritually confirmed (Bilby 1990).

Is there any reason to believe that the Yakubi-clan has a historical right to the leadership, because Aluku came from the Yakubi-lo? As mentioned before, various clans allege to descend from Aluku. According to the genealogies which Hurault (1961) attached to his study on the Aluku-Maroons, *gaanman* Aluku is the ancestor of the Ndju-lo. When reckoning backwards in time via these genealogies, we end up somewhere in the middle of last century. The link to the Maroon society of the eighteenth century is missing. There are no historical facts which sustain the assumption that Aluku is the ancestor of the Ndju-lo. The present Maroons generally

hold the opinion that all of them – with the exception of the Dikan-lo – descend from Aluku.

Archival sources suggest that Aluku and Boni lived together in the same village. If Aluku was Boni's stepfather, it is probable that Boni's mother also had children by Aluku. In that case Aluku can be considered a 'relative' of the Boni-clan. On account of the matrilineal principle, children belonged to their mother's matrigroup. Considering the fact that the important headmen had more than one spouse, their offspring belonged to different matri-groups. It is known, for example, that Boni had at least nine wives. It is therefore very questionable to regard a man as the one and only founder of a specific matriclan.

Aluku came from the plantation Marceille, which was called *Yakubi* by the slaves. There is no information available on Aluku's mother. It is very unlikely, that Aluku and his mother fled to the Maroons together (this rarely happened), although it is not altogether impossible. In the days of marronage, the Boni-Maroons used to keep the slaves from one and the same plantation together and send them to the forest to work the provision grounds collectively. If such a group was too small, it was added to another group of slaves. This way of living together primarily applied to the women. The men were much more mobile, as they traded with plantation slaves, and went out fishing, hunting and marauding the plantations. Boni and Aluku appointed a *kabiten* for each group. Many of these *kabiten* were already in charge of a certain group before they joined Boni. Some of these headmen were: Kormantin Kodjo, Suku of Marceille, Askaan of Ephrata and Koki of Klein. Groups under the leadership of a specific *kabiten* did not have a fixed residence. There are several archival references to the Maroons of Kormantin Kodjo, for example, who joined Aluku and Boni and to the Tesisi-Maroons who moved to the village of Kormantin Kodjo.

EPILOGUE

I have tried to present information – both from oral tradition and from the archives – currently available with respect to the person of Aluku. So far the output has been rather poor. We may hope that in future the oral tradition will yield more information. There seems to be a task here for the Aluku organization 'Mi Wani Sabi', one of whose goals is to record the oral tradition from the Aluku-Maroons. Perhaps the documents of the plantation Marceille contain more information.³⁰

We further do not have adequate information on the history of the

Yakubi-clan. The question whether the Yakubi-lo descended from Aluku remains unanswered. It is clear, that much of the history of Boni-Maroon society still remains to be written.

NOTES

1.a. For a more elaborate report on these Boni-Maroon Wars, see Hoogbergen 1985b, which also includes an extensive bibliography. In 1990 an adapted English version of this book will be published by E.J. Brill Publishers (Leiden, The Netherlands) under the title of *The Boni-Maroon Wars in Suriname*.

1.b. I would like to thank Marilyn Suy, Harry Hoetink and Ineke van Wetering for the critical remarks with respect to this text.

2. About a hundred Aluku-Maroons presently live along the banks of the middle Marowijne River. They are the descendants of the village chief Apatou, who settled in this region around 1880 together with his family.

3. In Axwijk's story, Agosu is just a boy from Boni's village. The archives also mention Agosu's name, but then it refers to Boni's own son.

4. It has only recently become clear that the 'Narrative' which was published in 1796 is considerably different from the original manuscript that was handed over for publication by the author in February 1791. The original text has been reedited by Richard and Sally Price and published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1988.

5.a. Bush creole: a negro who was not born on a plantation but in the forest. Elsewhere in the archives Asikan is referred to as Sylvester.

5.b. Algemeen Rijksarchief 's-Gravenhage (General State Archives, The Hague, abbreviated ARA), Archives of the *Sociëteit van Suriname* (Society of Suriname, abbreviated SvS), inventory number 161, Minutes of the *Hof van Politie* (Court of Policy): 3, 8 and 24 February 1769.

6. For further information on other important Maroon leaders, see my dissertation on the Boni-Maroons (Hoogbergen 1985a).

7. Part of Jonas's testimony had already been published in an article by Charles Brouwn in 1796. Chris de Beet reproduced this article together with most of Jonas's other testimonies in his publication on the first Boni-Maroon War (De Beet 1984: 52-55 and 204-230).

8. 'Yakubi' is the name used by the slaves in Suriname for the plantation Groot-Marceille in the Cottica area, which had been the property of the planter Marcellus Jacobij. In 1716 this large plantation had been brought into cultivation by Gerrit van Egten under the name of 'Eghthenveen'. When Marcellus Jacobij acquired the plantation in 1731, he changed the name into 'Marceille'. When he and his wife died in 1742, the plantation passed to their

sons who lived in The Netherlands. Their property in Suriname was controlled by administrators.

9. ARA – SvS 353, folio 370 and 399. Letters to Amsterdam, 1774.
10. ARA – *Oud-archief Suriname*, Court of Criminal Justice 1784, inventory number 840, folio 183.
11. ARA – SvS 396, folio 65. Letters to Amsterdam, 1791.
12. ARA – SvS 398, folio 26. Letters to Amsterdam, 1792.
13. Private communication H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen.
14. The Maroon Koki came from the plantation of Auka, situated on the upper Suriname River. Koki and his companions already lived in French Guiana before the Boni-Maroons settled there. Boni himself never lived on the Saluakreek (Hoogbergen 1985b; 235-240 and 332).
15. ARA – SvS 353, folio 209. Letter from Governor Jean Nepveu to the Directors in Amsterdam, 2 July 1774.
16. ARA – SvS 136, Minutes Court of Policy: 18 January, 14 and 16 March 1744.
17. A report dating from 1776 refers to a brother and sister of Boni being caught. See also De Beet 1984: 229. Further information on this expedition: ARA – SvS 138, Minutes Court of Policy: 18 January 1746 and SvS 200, folio 219-220. Journal of Governor Johan Jacob Mauricius, 1746.
18. ARA – SvS 160, Minutes Court of Policy, 2 May 1768 and Hoogbergen 1985b: 91-5.
19. André Pakosie, a Ndjuka-Maroon by birth, wrote the story on Boni's death at the age of seventeen, when he was at highschool in Paramaribo. The story is mainly based on his father's testimony.
20. The ratio between the sexes within the slave population had always been out of balance, for the men outnumbered the women by far. In addition, the women did not run away in such large numbers as men did.
21. In the 1760s the Tesisi-Maroons lived in the area between the upper Commewijne and Marowijne Rivers. Around 1770 they joined the group of Boni and Aluku (Hoogbergen 1985b: 105-35).
22. ARA – SvS 163, Minutes Court of Policy: 22 November 1771.
23. The Maroons of Kormantin Kodjo had already settled in the region between the Suriname and Commewijne Rivers before 1755. Early 1773 they joined the Maroons of Aluku and Boni in the Cottica area, following the example of the Tesisi-Maroons some years before (Hoogbergen 1985b: 170-82).

24. ARA – *Oud-archief Suriname*, Court of Criminal Justice 1773, inventory number 824.
25. ARA – *Oud-archief Suriname*, Court of Criminal Justice 1774, inventory number 826, folio 56.
26. ARA – *Oud-archief Suriname*, Court of Criminal Justice 1791, inventory number 854, minutes of 20 August 1791.
27. For a more extensive report on this subject, see Hoogbergen 1985b: 416-26.
28. ARA – SvS 184, Minutes Court of Policy: 19 August 1790. See also Hoogbergen 1984: 89.
29. Private communication Kenneth Bilby.
30. These archives can be found in 'the De Mey van Streefkerk Papers' of The James Ford Bell Library (University of Minnesota). Most of the documents in this collection are dated between 1742 and 1830; only fifteen documents are from an earlier period: 1717 to 1742 (Postma 1986).

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WORKING FOR THE MAN: A SARAMAKA OUTLOOK ON KOURO

One hundred and two years ago, when Saramakas deep in the interior of Suriname named a successor to their recently-deceased tribal chief, a delegation of elders had to set out by canoe down the Suriname River, to continue their journey in a small sailing ship by sea, until they reached Mana, French Guiana, where future tribal chief Akoósu had been working with some 100 other Saramaka men for nearly a decade ("Dosier [sic.] benoeming Akrosoe," Landarchief, Paramaribo). In 1936, more than 60% of all Saramaka men, some 2000 individuals, were off in French Guiana working (Wong 1938: 323, Price 1975: 71). And in 1968, when we lived in the Saramaka village of Dángogó (the southernmost village on the Pikílío and the most distant from Paramaribo), approximately half of the men from that village were away in Kourou, helping to construct the Centre Spatial Guyanais.¹

Guyane française: Land of Contrasts and Contradictions. Not long ago, we had the occasion to visit some old friends in the so-called "Village Saramaka" at Kourou. Living in mean little shacks almost in the shadow of the Ariane rocket, these immigrant workers continue to supply much of the manual labor at the missile base. We accompanied a woman (who had been our neighbor twenty years earlier in Dángogó) on what she called "a little trip to her provision-ground"; entering the small supermarket nearby, barefoot and barebreasted, she selected her groceries – a frozen chicken from Brittany (with labels in French and Arabic), a tin of sardines from Nantes, some Parisian candies for the kids. The next day, back in Cayenne, we were invited by colleagues from ORSTOM to a posh restaurant where, under a set-piece "tropical" thatch roof, we drank fine wines from the metropole and ate delicious stews of monkey, armadillo, and tapir – all everyday foods of Saramakas back home in Suriname.

During the first century of labor migration, Saramaka men held a consistently favorable view of French Guiana as a place to earn money, and even to settle down. In contrast, when doing wage labor or conducting trading trips on the coast of Suriname, they always felt themselves imbedded in a rigid colonial system, and they were aware that other ethnic groups saw them as low men on the totem pole. While coastal Suriname continued to represent the very world from which Saramakas' First-Time ancestors had extricated themselves by force of arms, French Guiana was perceived as a looser system, as having a "homier" atmosphere and a more relaxed environment – and as a place where they could earn good money far more freely, in occupations that left them considerable independence. Arriving during the early days of the gold rush, Saramakas quickly monopolized major supply routes to the interior and became French Guiana's rivermen par excellence, taking their pay from Antillian prospectors in bags of gold dust and living high off the hog with what their descendants still remember as gorgeous Creole women who were always available, they say, for men with gold in their pockets. When river transport slowed with the waning of the gold rush, Saramakas switched to other forest endeavors – logging, rosewood extraction, and so forth – but they continued to earn their money in occupations that left them largely free to set their own schedules and pace of work. Saramaka men of the generation now past sixty like to say that while Suriname is their "*máma kôndè*" (their matrilineal [home] village), French Guiana is their "*táta kôndè*" (their "father's village," their sentimentally favored place to be).

Some Saramaka men never came home, founding large families with Creole women along the rivers they call Puwági (l'Approuague) and Wáyapóku (l'Oyapock) – as well as elsewhere – with many of their daughters, and daughter's daughters, marrying later Saramaka immigrants. But the very great majority of Saramakas in French Guiana returned to Suriname, often going back and forth at several-year intervals during their whole adult lives, until they came home to die. The relative welcome felt by Saramakas in French Guiana, as opposed to the coldness they have always sensed in coastal Suriname, was clearly expressed during the late 1970s, when the situation of Maroons in newly-independent Suriname was already beginning to deteriorate, by the aged Gaamá Agbagó (Abóikóni) in conversations with us: "If only I were a few years younger, I would simply pull up stakes and lead my whole [Saramaka] people across the Marowijne...."

Since the construction of the space center at Kourou, the kinds of jobs available to Saramakas in French Guiana have shifted away from the formerly predominant forest and river occupations. What we might call

"servile wage labor" has now become the norm; Saramakas, who are considered by their bosses to be unusually conscientious workers, sweep the offices and clean out the toilets of French engineers, and do other low-paid local construction and maintenance work. No matter how personally demeaning these jobs seem, the men who hold them consider themselves lucky. Given the political and economic situation in Suriname, such jobs (which would once have been scorned by Saramakas) have become the only game in town; they put food on the table and allow some savings for a hoped-for better tomorrow back home. Yet the men who labor at Kourou remain concerned about their compromised dignity. Engaged in servile labor, they keep their equilibrium by referring frequently to First-Time (anti-white, anti-Western) ideology, and by reminding themselves that they must never forget who they really are. As we have written elsewhere,

For all those respected Saramaka historians or ritual specialists, for all those renowned woodcarvers or dancers who are forced by economic necessity (and lack of Western schooling) to clean out toilet bowls in the French missile-launching base at Kourou, First-Time ideology cannot but help remain a powerful, relevant force.... Continuities of oppression, from original enslavement and torture to modern political paternalism and economic exploitation, have been more than sufficient to keep First-Time ideology a living force.

(Price 1983: 12)

But First-Time ideology is only half the story. A related aspect of this struggle to maintain identity involves Saramaka insistence on their own definition of present-day reality, their refusal to accept the whiteman's (or Creole's) definition of the labor situation. In Saramaka terms, a man can maintain his dignity even when doing degrading and servile labor *as long as he never accepts the Other's definition of the situation*. Indeed, for Saramakas, that is the only successful way – barring violence – to deal with the alienation of labor that their forefathers encountered on the slave plantations of Suriname and that they now face each day at the missile base in Kourou. Having for some years moved back and forth between servile wage labor in French Guiana and work in their own fields and forest back home, Saramaka men are acutely aware of the contrasts between controlling their own activities and selling their labor as a commodity. Emblematic of these concerns is a Saramaka folktale, in which plantation slavery and wage slavery are poetically merged, and the secret to survival in these contexts is clearly spelled out: Never let the whiteman impose his definition of the situation.²



Saramaka Migrant Laborers in Kourou, 1987.

Left, Kasólu, who told this folktale at a wake in Dángogó in 1968.

It used to be there was plenty of wage-labor work. You'd go off to look for work, and there would always be some job available. There was one guy and you'd just go ask him for work, a white man. He was the one in charge of it. Now when you went to ask him for work, You'd say, "Well, Brother, I've come to ask you for a job." Then he'd say to you, "Well, look. I've got some." He has a big tremendous rice field. He's got a cacao field. He's got all kinds of fields spread out all around. He's got pigs. He's got cows. He's got chickens. He's got ducks. So you just appear out of nowhere, and ask him for a job, and he says to you, "Well, Brother, I've got some cacao over there. You could go gather the pods and bring them back to me. I'll give you a bag." So off you'd go. But when you went to touch it, one of the cacao pods would break off, and all the beans would fall down and run all over the place. The plant would be absolutely stripped. So you walk back to the king. (That's the white man who has the jobs. He's just like a king.³) You'd talk to him and say, "Well, king. Here I am. I went and touched one of the cacao plants to harvest it, and all the beans fell on the ground." So you told him about how everything fell down to the ground. The man says, "Really? Well, my boy, when the cacao fell like that, did it hurt you?" He said, "Yes, my king, it hurt me." King says, "OK, bring your butt over here." He'd slice off a kilo of butt. One kilo of flesh that he just cut right off and took. When the time came, you'd just go off to your house and die.

Then the next person would come along asking for work. He'd say, "My king,

I've come to ask you for a job." He'd say, "Well, no problem. In the morning, just go let out those cows I've got over there, let them out of the pen and bring them outside." In the morning, the man went and opened the pen right up. The cows fell down, *gúhúhúhú*, fell down, all over the ground, dead. He went back and said, "My king, I went like you said and opened the cows' pen over there. All of them fell down on the ground, dead." He said, "My boy, did it hurt you?" He said, "Yes, my king." The king said, "Bring your butt over here. He turned his butt toward the king and went over. The king sliced off one kilo and took it. The guy went off and died.

So that's the way it went. He just kept killing people. But the name of the king - I forgot to mention that. The king was "King Nothing-hurts-him" (or "King Nothing-can-get-him-angry").

But there was a young guy who decided to go ask for work. His mother didn't want him to. She said, "Child, don't go. The place where you're going to go ask for work - Well, not a single person has gone to ask for work there and returned. If you go ask for work there, you're as good as dead and gone. Don't go." He said he was determined to go. He arrived. He said, "My king, I've come to ask you for a job." "All right," he said. He said, "My boy, do you know who I am?" The boy said, "No." He said, "I am King Nothing-hurts-him." He said, "OK, no problem." And he went off to the work he had. He went off to pick the cacao. As he reached up to touch it, all the beans fell down and ran *gúhúhúhú* all over the ground. He went back to the king. He said, "King, I went to touch the cacao over there to harvest it, and it fell off all over the ground, it all broke off and fell down before I even touched it." He said, "My boy, did it hurt?" The boy said, "No. My king, it didn't hurt me." King said, "OK. No problem. It's all right." He said, "Let's go to sleep for the night."

In the morning he said, "Well, my boy? I'd like you to go harvest a field of rice I've got over there. Just go on and cut the rice." He went off, reached out to cut a stalk of rice, and they all fell and covered the whole area, *gúhúhúhú*. He went back, and he said, "My king, I went to cut the rice over there and all the stalks fell over to the ground." He said, "My boy, didn't it hurt?" He said, "No. How could it have hurt me?" He said, "OK." So nothing happened. The next morning, he said, "I'd like you to let out some chickens I've got over there." He went to let them out. But as he opened the door, all the chickens fell down on the ground, dead. As things fell, he would take something and just kill them right off. It didn't bother him if things fell. This was a kid who wasn't hurt by anything. He'd just cut things down. He'd just cut it down and kill it. The king said, "Well, my boy. In the morning you'll go and open a duck pen I've got over there." He opened it. Whoosh!! Flap! They just kept on coming out and falling down. He finished every one of them off, just cut them up, dead! He went back and said, "My king, those ducks I went to let out, well, such-and-such a thing happened." He said, "Well, my boy, did it hurt you?" The boy said, "My king, it didn't hurt me." "Oh," he said. Well, this kept going on and on until there was nothing left in that place. I don't need to list all that was gone. There was absolutely nothing left. He'd killed everything. All that was left was some pigs he had.

So he said, "Well, my boy. Go open up the pig pen over there." So he went to let out the pigs. The pigs all fell down. So he jumped out and he clubbed them all to death. Cut them all up. Cut off their tails and took them. Then he buried those tails. He took the rest of the pigs' bodies and hid them off in the underbrush.

He just buried those tails till all that was left above ground was a teeny tiny bit, the tips were barely sticking up.

He just did it to make a problem with the king. He killed absolutely all of them. Then he came out and he ran to him. He went straight to his king. "My king, my king!" he said. "I went to go let out the pigs, and all of them burrowed down under the ground! So I ran back to tell you!" The king said [very agitated], "Where?" He said, "Over there!" The king said, "Let's go!" He ran off and when he arrived he looked around. Now, the way they were buried, the pigs' tails went deep into the ground, and only a little piece was sticking up. You couldn't grab it to pull it out. They grabbed them as tight as they could. The king said, "This won't work. You know what we'll do?" "What?" said the boy. "Run back to my wife, in the house over there. Go have her give you a shovel. Quick! Bring it back." The kid ran back there. He really ran fast to get there, and he said, "Quick! Hurry up, as fast as you can. My king says to!" "All right," she said. So then he told her - "My king says to tell you - Well, what he says is that I should 'live' with you." "What did you say?" she asked. "Yes," he said. "Quick! Quick! Quick! That's what he said!" She said, "No way!" The king turned and shouted back to her, "Quick! Give it to him quick! Give it to him quick! Give it to him right away!" She said, "OK, I understand." The king said "Give it to him! Give it to him! Give it to him! Fast! Fast!" That's what he said. "Give him! Give him! Give him! Give him! Give him!" The boy took the wife and threw her right down on the bed. And then he went to work. Well, that shovel that the king sent the boy back for, in a rush, so they could dig up the pigs - Well, the boy didn't bring it back so quickly. He was gone for quite a while, and finally the king said, "Something's wrong." He ran on back to the house, looked in, and the boy was on top of his lady. He fell over backwards and just lay there. The boy said, "My king, did this hurt you?" He said, "Yes, this hurt me." The boy said, "Bring your butt over here!" The king turned his butt toward the boy and approached him. He brought his butt over. The boy lopped off a kilo. And then the king died. That's why things are the way they are for us. Otherwise, it would have been that whenever you asked for work from a white man, a king, he'd kill you. The boy took care of all that for us. That's as far as my story goes.

Refusing to accept the whiteman's definition of the situation, the boy triumphed in the end. And today, however hard it is for Saramaka men to retain their inner strength and dignity while submitting to humiliating work in French Guiana, tales like this help them keep going.

It is interesting that none of the other versions of this folktale known to us from non-Maroon sources - from the Cape Verde Islands, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, coastal Suriname, and Haiti⁴ - contain the same, prototypically Maroon, central message. These others focus on explicit contests or wagers between a boy and a king (sometimes a boy and a devil) to see who can keep from getting angry the longest. In this comparative context, what is striking about the Saramaka version of the tale is that it describes an ongoing, long-term labor situation - indeed, alienated labor itself - and that, rather than a particular, explicit "contract"

about not getting angry, the story hinges on the hero figuring out (after many of his fellows have already been killed in the attempt) that the only way to triumph is to question the very nature of the system itself, not to accept the boss's definition of the labor situation, be it slavery or servile wage labor.⁵

Today, contrary to what one sometimes hears in the Guyanese press or at the neighborhood café, the eight or ten thousand Djukas and perhaps two or three thousand Saramakas who find themselves in French Guiana (the great majority as refugees from Suriname's civil war) are in no way looking for a free lunch. Like their warrior forefathers, their essential quest is for simple human dignity, for the right to work and live as free people. And in this bicentennial year of the French Revolution, perhaps we should keep in mind that Saramakas (as well as their Aluku, Djuka, Matawai, and Paramaka counterparts) were in this sense early fighters for *liberté* – and that their descendants are asking for little more today.⁶

Indeed, the current civil war in Suriname in an important sense represents the continued playing out of contrasts between slave (or Creole) and Maroon definitions of reality, between differing ideological stances toward Western authority. Saramaka folktales, like the spirit that inspires the Jungle Commandos who are fighting against Suriname's army, are infused with a firm sense of Afro-American differentness, a recognition that Maroons fought and died (and continue to do so) for a place on the fringe of the plantation (today the Western) world where they can maintain their dignity and moral independence. The Maroons fighting today do not seek political independence or separation from the national state, any more than their eighteenth-century ancestors wished to cut themselves off from the plantation society of the coast. In both cases, Maroons have been well aware of their dependence on the coastal society for all sorts of material goods, and have maintained intimate contacts through kinship and other ties with people in coastal Suriname and French Guiana. The contest today, as two hundred years ago, is ultimately about identity, about the viability of self-definitions that are not made-in-Europe or made-in-the-U.S.A.

Were the Maroon refugees in French Guiana given the opportunity to realize these aspirations, for example by grants of land in the unused interior (where they could engage in types of labor at which they are expert, and which do not involve automatic alienation, such as forest agriculture) the eventual rewards could be considerable. Drawing on their unique knowledge of the Amazonian ecosystem, Saramakas (as well as Djukas and Paramakas, not to mention Alukus) have made important contributions to the economy, and to the culture, of French Guiana for more than a century. Given the genuine human misery of the Maroons who have been uprooted from

their homes by the ongoing war, it might well be an appropriate moment to recognize these contributions and to seek ways to encourage the further participation and integration of these people (and, through adequate schooling, their children), into the life of an ethnically-diverse Guyane of the future.

NOTES

1. Portions of this paper draw on the introduction to Price & Price 1990; an earlier version was presented by R. Price at the conference, "Identité, Culture et Développement", in Cayenne, 1 July 1989.
2. Saramaka folktales are told as part of funeral rites. Dynamic and filled with performative nuance, they are supremely interactive, with the teller engaging the listeners in an ongoing give-and-take as the tale unfolds. The tale included here in summary form was told in 1968 by Kasólu, a man then in his late twenties, to an enthusiastically participating group of the deceased woman's relatives, friends, and neighbors. Price & Price 1990 presents English translations of two evenings of Saramaka tale-telling, recorded during wakes in 1968, and includes the complete version of Kasólu's tale.
3. Afro-American folktales frequently allude, implicitly or explicitly, to equivalences between kings, slave masters, white men, and devils – each of whom controls labor, and money. (In this context, it is worth noting that in Saramaka folktales, the speech of devils is consistently rendered in Sranan, the language of coastal Suriname.) For a discussion of related themes in the French Antilles, see Giraud & Jamard 1985.
4. See, for other versions, Andrade 1930: 48-49; Herskovits & Herskovits 1936: 368-75; Mason & Espinosa 1922: 44-47; Parsons 1923: 112-16; Parsons 1933-43, Pt II: 572.
5. Note that as part of the redefinition of the labor situation in the Saramaka tale, the hero shifts – over the course of his relationship with the king/boss – from the role of passive victim (having plants break as soon as he reaches out to harvest their fruit) to that of an active aggressor (bludgeoning the king's animals to death).
6. As a recent French newspaper article pointed out, almost with incredulity, under the headline, "Des condamnés au 'non-droit'":

For more than two years in a French *département*, la Guyana, many thousands of Surinamers have been 'parked' in camps under the control of the French army, without rights of residence, the right to work, the right to attend school, guarantees not to be sent back to the land they fled because of persecution, the right of free speech, and so forth.... These Maroons have been placed outside the law ... without the official status of refugees to which both normal French law and international law entitle them. *Libération*, 9 May 1989, p. 25).

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SOME PROMINENT FEATURES OF NDJUKA MAROON MEDICINE

The health-care system of the Ndjuka Maroons,¹ which evolved through a 17-18th-century slave-culture synthesis of Amerindian, African, British and Dutch, and Portuguese Jewish ideas on illness and health, has many features in common with those of other Afro-Caribbean cultures.² The fact that its closest cultural counterpart appears to be Haitian medicine, which like that of the Maroons also stopped receiving a constant input of Western medical theory during the (late) 18th century, would seem to suggest a chronological cultural continuum for Afro-American health-care systems. From an early synthesis, that may have been wide-spread throughout the 17th and early 18th century Caribbean, these systems came under increasing pressure during the 19th century³ to acculturate toward the Hippocratic medical concepts popular in the West. They may have elaborated their local versions and developed their coherence by replacing many concepts and practices belonging to an earlier model.⁴ Maroon medical theory may be found to retain a higher proportion of ideas and practices from this earlier selection.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Ndjuka health-care is its complete immersion in the coherent socio-cultural whole, and the crucial role allotted to illness as the revealing mark of any troubled socio-cosmic relations. Unlike most Caribbean societies, those of the Surinamese Maroons, once their struggles with the colonial militia had ended in peace treaties and recognized legal status, enjoyed the political autonomy and geographic space that allowed them to develop full-blown African-style matrilineages and clans, bound in a tribal unity, ritually anchored in territories, sanctuaries and ancestral villages. In this holistic society, the problem of affliction belongs to the more general interpretive model of misfortune. But the multi-layered explanations of illness are worked out

in reference to elaborate concepts of body, the mobility and the permeability of its parts, its extensions, its inclusion in and mutual influence on wider and deeper social (genealogical) bodies. Cases of individual crises are anticipated, then seized upon: their somatic expression is molded by ongoing observations and speculations proffered by the bed-side congregation as to the organic influences and the perturbed relations which have contributed to the affliction. The majority of rituals in this society today attend upon just such signs, so that much religious activity is triggered off by affliction, and many exchanges within the social realm involve curing rites and payments for therapy.

TWO EXPLANATORY LEVELS

As has often been noted for other Afro-Caribbean societies, the explanatory model of illness among the Ndjuka distinguishes two orders of causality: one, a psycho-physiological level of interpretation which reasons in terms of an indigenous theory of bodily exchanges with the milieu (including the influence of symbolic acts) completed by a repertoire of specified⁵ illnesses, and two, a socio-cosmic level which points to relevant relationships. In local parlance these two explanatory registers are often distinguished by referring to those benign, mechanical syndromes as "illnesses of God" (*gadu siki*). Empirically, the distinction is clearly marked by the divinatory process which investigates only impinging socio-cosmic factors leaving it to the imagination of mortals to ponder the physiological aspects. In Ndjuka theory the two conceptual domains of causality are not divided into hermetic systems as they apparently are in Martiniquan medicine.⁶ In some instances, aspects of the socio-cosmic level appear to borrow a physiological logic – food taboos which are the markers of transcendental relationships revealed through divination, appear, by their automatic and predictable somatic symptoms to belong to the realm of mechanical causality. The two explanatory registers overlap at certain moments – as for instance in the interdependence of the "heart's-breath" and the personalized spiritual element, the *akaa*. Both are present and articulated in the significance of each major part of the body. Emotional life, seated in the "heart's-breath", is often a turning point between the two levels according to whether emotional disturbances reverberate back against oneself or outward against others. Both levels of causality operate on certain basic principles, such as: 1) the capacity of important body parts to be invaded by, to contain or to conduct both physical and spiritual forces, from the exterior toward the inside, or vice versa, 2) the vulnerability to spirit attacks that results

from either weakened physical or troubled social conditions, and 3) metonymy – the capacity of a part (of the individual body or of the social body) to stand for the whole.

CONCEPTION

Both mechanical and spiritual intervention are necessary to conception, though they are certainly not synchronous – in fact it is in the first phase of conception that the two levels of physiological and spiritual reality seem most separate. From the time of original creation, God left human reproduction to the influence of the Mother-Earth (*Goonmama*) materializing in the form of the boa constrictor (*papa gadu*), who taught Adam and Efa the mechanics of the operation. The particular aspects of sexual relations and the quality of the fertile fluids of both partners count heavily in bringing about conception. But conception is also due to the spiritual penetration of the woman by a spirit of place (*peesí pe a sama komoto*) which is a refraction of the Mother-Earth. The spirit marks the child's body as well as being partly internalized as a secondary soul (*bon gadu*) and influences its health, and later directs its productive and reproductive destiny. The foetus, through its fontanel, then receives nourishment from its mother and, from God, receives its vital spiritual element, the *akaa*, which is perceptible after birth as a throbbing in the soft spot of the head. Into this new life yet a third spiritual element incorporates itself, the *nenseki*, the returning *akaa* of a former ancestor, who may mark the body of the baby with characteristics of his or her own form or with the symptoms of the disease from which the ancestor died. Thus from its early beginnings, the baby is moulded by both spiritual and physiological elements and linked by personal bonds to each of the two opposing spiritual domains which dominate Ndjuka society: that of the forest and river and that of the ancestors – those of its matrilineage, those of its father's matrilineage, and those of the agnatic line. Rather than standing apart from the spirit world, each person is its incarnation, its container, its conduit and its medium: emotional and imaginative life is finely tuned to give these realities bodily expression.

At birth, the baby's body will be daubed with the blood of his navel string. This single act, like many ritual treatments, is effective simultaneously on two levels: infusing the infant himself with the vital essence of blood, and making its successful delivery the harbinger of others to come, thus insuring the creation of the mother's *paansu*, her future progeny (see below). The invigorating of individual and future genealogical bodies has its

corolary in marking the corpse in the same manner with the blood of a sacrificial rooster when, in the funeral rites, the two levels are finally fused: the subject exists, then, *only* in the socio-cosmic domain.

THE BODY⁷

Over a hundred and fifty indigenous terms identify different body parts, fluids and excretions, but most illnesses are diagnosed and treated with reference to only ten of these. A division of the body into upper and more spiritual (head and "heart's-breath") as opposed to lower (belly) and more polluting regions is relevant to faecal and menstrual excretions and to sex roles. It is also translated into functional right/left body oppositions and back/front oppositions related to houses and village quarters. But the more frequent division of the body in terms of illness is a tripartite one into: 1. head, (*ede*), 2. "heart's breath" (*boh f'ati*) heart-lungs-liver, and for certain symptoms stomach, and 3. the belly (*bee*) including all other internal organs in the pelvic region. The head is predominantly the sounding board of spiritual forces, its afflictions are direct indications of the presences, absences or passages of spiritual entities and its afflictions are not generally diagnosed as physiological. The "heart's breath" and the belly are both cavities which can be invaded by cold/wind and are mobile organs which may suffer displacement. The "heart's breath" harbors the (usually dangerous) emotional life of the individual which can lie at the root of health problems for himself or for others, while the belly is the milieu where illnesses are seeded and where life and death take root. Cauldron of human metamorphoses in terms of the individual body, the *bee* is, in terms of *social* bodies, the eternal corporate matrilineage – all those, both the quick and the dead, who descend from a single individual "belly".

Other prominent body parts in respect to vulnerability or therapy, mouth, eyes, legs-feet, and skin, represent important orifices conducting illnesses, cold/wind, essences (infecting or therapeutic), spirits, and shapes⁸ respectively to the "heart's-breath" and belly, to the head, to the belly, to the total body and attendant spiritual entities. Breath and blood are subdivisions of these three fundamental parts, breath enjoying the metaphorical sense of personal strength and ambition, blood being not only the vital element of life, both physiological and spiritual essence, but the means of transmitting, through the maternal line, historically determined relationships, vulnerabilities, and forces.

The whole body is spiritually unified by a triple presence of the vital

spiritual element, the *akaa*. It is primarily in the head, secondarily in the "heart's-breath", and finally in the big toes. The feet/legs are in a privileged position: they bring the person into close contact with the forces and spirits in the domain of the Mother-Earth as well as the spirits of the dead, and they are highly expressive and frequently somatized.

A last and lesser opposition could be proposed between the back and the belly. The back lacking physiological importance (but a metaphor for the spiritual forces which stand behind one – namely one's *akaa*, one's ancestors), and the belly, devoid of sustaining spiritual presence (though it is occupied by the nonspiritual albeit biologically necessary worms). The belly invites penetration and occupation by spirits planting conception or illness and death. Death from spirit-implanted illness can occur only if the infection reaches the "heart's-breath", which, then, often falls, releasing the *akaa*, which passes out of the body. If, however, the attacking entity can be constrained through the power of *obia*, (see below) to rise into the head and express its grievance in trance-like possession, then it can, ultimately, be paid off, tamed and trimmed into a domesticated divinity which will protect against other invasions.

Of importance to health is the maintenance of a normal flow of body substances (of breath, blood, sperm, milk, urine, excreta, menstrual blood) whose stoppage is dangerous to the organism, whose evacuation is not only beneficent but therapeutic. Intake (particularly of foods)⁹ is ambivalent and fraught with threats both physical and spiritual (especially tabooed foods or witchcraft) while evacuation (though operative only on a mechanical level) is cleansing and is therapeutically provoked by laxatives, emetics, and diuretics to eliminate dirty waters, blood clots, or the pollution caused by cold or fever. The extreme permeability of the body to outside influences and spirits, and the constant risk involved in absorbing substances puts the person in jeopardy. Attempts are made to counteract invasion by shutting oneself up at night behind closed doors and windows, during the day, by amulets called "locks" (*tapu*) worn on the person and fixed to medicinal baths. Like other Afro-Caribbean medical systems, that of the Ndjuka concentrates much activity on reinforcing body and spiritual resistance to affliction through prophylaxes.

BODIES, SINGULAR AND PLURAL

Bodies engender other bodies in an enveloping sequence of mutually influencing units. The intruding presence of a woman into spiritual haunts invites her fertilization by the spirit of the place and brings into being

her *paansu* – “off-shoots”. The *paansu* forms the nucleus of the matrilineage and stands as a half-way house between individual reproductive ambitions and complete social groups. The *paansu* is not a social group, but the raw material of which the matrilineage (*bee*) will be formed. Its imagery conjures up a sort of sexless, botanical reproduction linked to the female-dominated world of jungle gardens, of mother and children permanently rooted to a single plant exclusive of any paternity. In the maternal domain of *paansu*, men are children, and authority, to the extent that it exists, belongs with the grandmother. A woman’s *paansu* is naturally imbedded, from the start, in the wider matrilineal social unit. After the third generation its contours melt imperceptibly into the body of the lineage where male ancestors and living uncles confer cultural, judicial and historical dimensions on the larger social body. But, the intrinsically greater embodiment of the *paansu* united by its genealogical ties remains a single unity with regard to most of the spirit world. Spirits of the bush and river, refractions of the Mother-Earth, stand at the poles of human conception and disintegration: they are directly responsible for the increase or decrease of the *paansu*, while spirits of sorcery or angered ancestors attack its members indiscriminately; the weakest spots tend to be children and pregnant young women.

The wide social group, the *bee*, is also seen as a single body by lineage ancestors and by *kunu* spirits which are fewer but more powerful than the many which besiege the *paansu*. If birth is a specialty of the *paansu*, illness and death are major concerns of the wider social body, the *bee*, which assures ascension to ancestor status. It is the *bee* which transmits to future generations, through the matrilineal blood, the sum of its individuals’ relations to the spirit world.

DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY

Socio-cosmic causes behind illnesses (and formerly behind deaths) of lineage members are, therefore, of prime importance to lineage authorities since the problems they represent may devolve onto the affected person from within the collective body, may extend then to other members, may affect relations with other lineages, or, originating with the afflicted individual, be added to the collective lineage heritage. Revelations of this order must, then, meet with the approval of elders and dignitaries who are invested with lineage authority by virtue of being representatives of the ancestors and closer to them. However, though lineage direction may discount or curb irrelevant or irreverent interpretations of affliction, it does not exercise

total control over them. Illness is a forum in which many voices may speak their mind, allowing all impending problems and fears to surface and find expression and perhaps partial resolution. The several proposed explanations may all receive approbation, for illness is both a mysterious and a messy affair in which a person first rendered vulnerable by a physical or relational weakness is then preyed upon by an increasing number of forces and prevented from getting well by other, background, factors which withhold benediction or spoil the atmosphere generally. Despite a number of preferred diagnoses, since there are no exclusive, one-for-one correlations between symptoms and socio-cosmic explanations, any illness is an opportunity for complete social and religious commentary.

THE MECHANICS OF INTERPRETATION

Ostensibly, the motive for analyzing an illness is to select the appropriate therapy. We have noticed that causality can be situated simultaneously on an organic level and on a socio-metaphysical level. There is no contradiction in affirming that a post-partum infection is due to the infiltration of the vulnerable cavity by cold because the young mother forgot to take the precaution of boiling water before drinking it and, at the same time claiming that angry words exchanged some time earlier between the girl and her aunt are responsible. Both aspects will be dealt with in therapy. In fact, no matter how dominant any spiritual interpretation may become, treatment will continue to tackle the affliction from the physical angle as well, since physical and socio-spiritual vulnerabilities or strengths reinforce each other in a vicious – or victorious – circle.

Physiological causality, however, is rarely important in determining therapies since most of these take charge of the symptoms rather than the causes. Such diagnoses are rarely (with two known exceptions) within professional practice, but are simply free-for-all commentary voiced by the surrounding family. Nor do they include much information from the afflicted individual, whose state is more manipulated and spoken of by others than by himself. The probing questions necessary to Western diagnoses are foreign to the Ndjuka understanding of functional ills.

Interrogation becomes important, however, in sounding out the occult. We noted earlier the distinction between organic causality and problems involving relationships as being marked out, once and for all, by divination. Mediums in trance, "carry oracles", swaying arm-bands, moving calabashes, etc. may be solicited to give their opinions on the contributing socio-cosmic factors in question. Most of these oracles are "professional" which

is to say they belong to the category of *obia* (see below). Their revelations are usually cautious, proceeding step-by-step, always allowing for the intervention of ideas from the participating family group and leaving the case open to further interpretation. Questions to oracles (other than mediums) are framed by proposing a first series of six or seven major headings which are then further refined into some twenty minor subgroups, and finally linked to specific events. The exceptionally rich repertoire of socio-spiritual causes in this society is probably the result of the original pooling of ideas from many African cultures.

OBIA

With the rare exceptions of a possessing ancestor or of sorcery spirits, the voices speaking through divination are, as is almost all therapy, classified as *obia*. *Obia* (also spelled *obeah*) is an original Afro-American category evolved in the early days of British West Indian slavery and still prevalent in former British colonies, though considerably narrowed to the quadrant of (often black) magic. It seems to have welcomed, in a single conceptual frame-work, any and all transcendent knowledge-authority, relationships and powers which each new African arrival managed to bring with him to surmount the bitter realities of poverty, illness, death, and slavery. To the category of *obia* belongs all of Ndjuka religious life with the exception of that pertaining to the ancestors or witchcraft, all positive magical practice, all rituals not relating to the dead, all therapy except for some devalued home-remedies. *Obia* is then a vast, heterogenous category, open to the participation of all and each Ndjuka who, according to his own bent, develops an increasing number of personalized links to this category during the course of his lifetime. As most people begin acquiring their first *obia* in the form of valued remedies learned in early adult life and as each *obia* bears the stamp of professional medical practice, roles of patient and practitioner alternate both in practice and in ideology. As the Ndjuka put it: "The leper treats the leper".

Ndjuka society is at once hierarchical, rank and authority devolving upon one in any particular situation by virtue of relative age, genealogical or affinal relationships, or appointment to ancestor-representative positions; but it is at the same time defiantly egalitarian. The egalitarian ideology is rooted in the individualized system of production and quest of wealth and in the equal opportunity of each individual to develop his own relations to *obia*. Though much of the major *obia* is tightly bonded to lineages which jealously guard their exclusive rights to its use, there remains a

large quadrant of minor *obia* including most medical practice which is open to personal acquisition, use and transmission. The quest for health in this society is a door-to-door search, both for diagnoses and for treatment; all interpretations and medications can be added one upon another. Despite the fact that certain gifted individuals accumulate many different *obia* and mediumships and, thus, come to the foreground of therapy in later life, there is almost no one who does not pride himself in having some form of personal *obia* which allows him to detect the occult aspect of ills or offer some forms of therapy to an occasional or in-family clientele. Like the sharing of food, the alternating treatment *of* and treatment *by* others is a high form of sociability.

All *obia* is creation in combination. It seems to represent, on another plane of interaction between society and nature, a structural inversion of the passive, sexless conception of life by a woman accidentally trespassing upon the precincts of an earth or water spirit and inseminated by this entity. Ideologically male-oriented, and antithetical to sex relations and female pollution, the making of *obia* involves intentional penetration of the Earth-Mother's domain by men who actively apply ancestral knowledge-authority to essences, forces, and spirits drawn from the realm of forest and river to bring forth a new power which will work to sustain the human existence born of a first, ambivalent spiritual encounter.

All *obia*, from the most modest remedy in a woman's repertoire to the most powerful divinity are said to be basically the same thing. Almost all therapy, then, is considered to operate along the same principles, regardless of whether one is treating a banal ailment, ritually removing the effects of bad words or grooming a new possessing spirit. The dichotomy earlier cited between physical and socio-spiritual ills vanishes in the therapeutic category of *obia*. *Obia* treats both. *Obia* makes use of the forces of the Mother-Earth harbored in white clay and flourishing in plants whose essences are extracted and combined into a new medicinal entity. All *obia* is fusion, nascence and transcendence. A single plant used to treat a symptom is not *obia*. Yet, interestingly enough, the use of single plant remedies, so much in favor among neighboring Amerindian cultures and possibly learned from them, persists in Ndjuka households as a devalued, first-aid medication for minor physical problems whose recipes are freely exchanged and whose use is not validated by payment.

In therapy, then, the cleavage between biological and supernatural causes is suppressed, whereas a new, technical, division does appear between what is sacred medicine, *obia*, and what is secular phytotherapy. The sacredness is not strictly determined by the botanical identity of any particular plant: many plants are highly sacred but they may also be picked, paid, and

used for simple earthy virtues, such as home-remedies or and even as food. The use of these same plants in different therapeutic contexts suggests that their therapeutic value evolves through several levels of increasingly spirit-focused stages which exploit, for each level, distinct potentialities of the plant.

LEVELS OF THERAPY

On the lowest level, a single plant may be used or simply a commercial product taken at the first on-set of ailment to combat the symptoms.

The second level is already considered sacred medicine, the simplest form of *obia*, and requires payment. Symptoms, but also malfunctions, syndromes, and specified ailments are treated without reference to socio-spiritual causes.

A third level of therapy proceeds to recognize the intervention of spiritual or social problems, but attempts to eradicate them without defining their nature. Some of the *obia* on this level are named, learned and transmitted, such as "clean-body obia" which erases impinging evil forces. Others are improvised happenings under the spiritual inspiration of the practitioner-medium. Plant ingredients here may be seen as calmatives, or spirit-chasers. Such techniques are resorted to when it is suspected the revelations may be of a delicate nature or, like sorcery investigations, have unfortunate social repercussions.

A turnabout occurs when divination is undertaken. Inevitably a socio-cosmic cause will be cited, and, if divination proceeds to inquire further, a particular spirit or ghost will be named. On the fourth level of therapy appropriate rituals must be undertaken. Most of these revolve around a central theme of payment to the intervening spirit and the taking of plant baths. In the case of illness caused by an ancestor spirit, the plant concoctions are said to "remove the hand of the ancestor" whereas in the case of nature spirits, the precise spirit is called and offered his plant while touchy neighboring spirits must be appeased with theirs and various other aspects, left to the inspiration of the *obiaman* (practitioner of sacred medicine).

On the ultimate level of therapy, the focus of action is no longer directed toward the illness, nor toward resolving its cause, but is concerned with transforming and domesticating the spirit that sent the illness. At this stage the plants used are said to be "words", with all the magical, activating power that implies. They may function as commands. They may also be endowed with such specific cultural or physical properties that they appear

more personified than the spirit itself which, like a canvas, takes on its colors and contours from the plants used to fashion it. In the crucial phase of domestication, the master plant, combined with others, rises to become the spirit's "boss", to be invoked by the possessed medium in trance.

PAYMENT - *PAIMAN*¹⁰

No understanding of socio-cosmic causes of illness, nor of their therapy is possible without some reference to the crucial concept and praxis of "payment", or *paiman*. *Paiman* is basic to the normal judicial regulating of social conflict which may anger ancestors, provoke lineage *kunu* and weaken the social body, leaving it prey to devastating spirit intervention. Resolving differences between people by payment is therefore a sort of social prophylaxis continually warding off illness and death. *Paiman* is central to repairing damage and restoring harmonious relations between mortals and spirits disturbed by them. It is, then, the ritual exchange resorted to when spirits have retaliated for a wrong by sending illness. And *paiman* is the obligatory return for work, especially sacred work, and therefore the necessary counterpart to all *obia*. In the making of *obia*, each participant, each ingredient, each owner of contributing essences or knowledge-authority is paid with appropriate offerings (clay, twigs, food, rum, cloth,) to guarantee their help. The emergent *obia* is recognized and feted by important theatrical performances of payment.

It may be noted in passing that however played-down, payment is a ubiquitous characteristic of Afro-Caribbean medicinal systems. The importance of payment in Afro-Surinamese ritual was earlier commented on by a Dutch student of anthropology, P. Schoonheym, following a brief period of field work, but his analysis of this exchange missed the point, focused as it was on its impressive economic aspect. The high finance sometimes involved in *paiman* is in fact but a material residue of what is, in Afro-Surinamese societies, an example of Mauss' classic *fait social total* - a total socio-cosmic phenomenon, a conceptual pillar of society.

Paiman is the archetype of essential exchanges - those not concerned with the simple sharing of material resources among relatives or the reciprocity of mutual gift-giving. *Paiman* deals with the problem of unequal exchange. It resolves the quandary of how to make restitution in material terms for some essence lost or risked through the rendering of services, the use of a person's name, the abuse of his person, etc. In so doing, it does more than gratify his material desires: it addresses the restorative

essence of (often symbolic) riches to higher instances or more spiritualized entities (one's own *akaa*, one's family group, one's ancestors, the spirit to whom one is medium, etc.) Although the predominance of this concept in Ndjuka culture allows its extrapolation and application in ever-widening circles of meaning and social interaction and its translation into many different forms, *paiman* is preferably expressed, like *obia*, in a heterogenous combination. This avoids any equivalence being implied between the essence to be restored and a single material item. The category of riches, *gudu*, understood in its larger, philosophical, sense, embraces at once human life (styled "riches of the *bee*"), "living" things (rooster, egg, gun) and valuables, which themselves are also animated with a shadow of spirituality. Essence lost can only be replaced by a multiple form of material riches, in a sort of cornucopia effect. The most faithful translation of the concept of *paiman* into practice can be seen in relation to the making of *obia*, where the practitioner receives his emoluments in the form of a heterogeneous package at the center of which figure the two doubly symbolic and complementary forms of riches: that of cloth (associated with women and spirits of place) and that of rum (associated with men and with ancestors).

Payment, both in concept and in empirical terms, ultimately evokes questions of life and death. Non-payment of service or disservice weakens the "loser" or incurs his wrath or that of spiritual entities associated with him, creating a milieu propitious to the appearance of illness. Payment, then, is that half of an exchange cast on the side of life, strength, revitalization. "Payment does not kill."

Yet the concept of payment can also be turned into a negative form: one "pays" for one's faults. *Paiman*, in the Ndjuka system of justice, is often at once a restitution to angered ancestors or their human representatives and a punishment inflicted on the guilty party. Heavy fines do not kill, but they are intended to hurt. As the Ndjuka put it, "*paiman* is our prison."

We may also discover the metaphor and the rationale of *paiman* at the most basic level of metaphysical exchange in the Ndjuka universe, that of conception, illness and death. For in relation to earth spirits, both conception and death are the "payment" exacted or inflicted by the spirit, according to the severity of the intrusion. Physiological change and metaphysical exchange between spirit and person are here provoked by the same disturbance and meet with the same reaction – the spirit's "going to the belly", holding life hostage or placing lives in an interim state (pregnancy being considered a form of illness whose outcome – birth or death – is yet unknown). In both cases, sooner or later, the spirit will

be "paid" by an offer of material riches substituting for that of human life. If the spirit accepts, then health will be recovered; if it refuses, illness will evolve into death, adding its perturbations to the collective lineage heritage.

NOTES

1. This article is based on information gathered during four field trips from 1984 to 1988 financed by the Ministère de la Patrimoine as part of a multidisciplinary study of Maroon medicine, conducted under the auspices of ORSTOM.
2. See, for example: Bougerol, 1983; Dobbin, 1986; Grenand, 1987; Loyola, 1983; Métraux, 1953; Mischel, 1959; Peeters, 1979; Wong, 1976; Wooding, 1983.
3. C. Bougerol (1983) makes much of pressures brought to bear on slaves in the French islands at that time. In our opinion she exaggerates the passive mimicry by French slaves of the Hippocratic hot-cold syndrome through ignorance of hot-cold oppositions already functioning in native African systems (see Bonnet 1985).
2. Ndjuka Maroons never adopted the full hot/cold opposition so important in Caribbean medicine, but may have been in the process of replacing an earlier concept of dangerous air or wind by the predominant idea of polluting "cold" for the two are used synonymously and "cold" in Ndjuka theory has little to do with temperature.
3. To date, our research has turned up 105 distinct ailments identified by Ndjuka.
4. Peeters, 1979.
5. For a complete analysis of body concepts see Vernon, n.d.
6. Forms seen and touched (the skin acting as an orifice of equal importance to the mouth) can penetrate the pregnant woman and imprint themselves on the developing foetus.
7. Vernon and Delpech, 1989.
8. Vernon, 1987.

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AT HOME WITH A PROSPECTOR IN FRENCH GUIANA:
A SKETCH¹

Thursday, September 16, 1982. Woke up well rested, thanks be to God, said my prayers, drank my coffee, went to my *bati* (garden), felled some trees. Worked hard till 2 o'clock. Back to the village, made myself something to eat, then did some little chores around the house. In the evening, some weeding and a visit to Richard's, joking around with him and Jojo. Came home at 9, ate, said my prayers, and then to bed.

For many years, Derik Pinel has jotted down his daily activities in small school notebooks. The seasons pass but his daily routine repeats itself untiringly, through the grace of God. Only recently, during one of my stays in French Guiana (conducting fieldwork among the Creole population), did he share his notebooks with me. Might he have wanted to make me understand that my view of his world was incomplete and that if I were ever to grasp the texture of his day-to-day life, it would have to be through his own accounts? In any case, his notes have served to complement my own and to contribute meaningfully to my goal of preserving something of the memory of Guiana's last gold prospectors and their way of life.

The Maroni River basin is inhabited by three populations – Creoles, Maroons, and Amerindians – each of which keeps largely to itself.² Although all three groups share the same natural environment, each one's way of life is distinctive.

THE MARONI CREOLES

Despite having settled along the Maroni nearly a century ago, the Creoles

of the French Guiana hinterland are still a shifting population, with no strong sense of attachment to a particular community. Comprised mainly of St. Lucians, most of the Creoles of the interior were forced to leave once the gold deposits had been depleted, since there was no means of livelihood other than prospecting. In general a solitary occupation, prospecting reinforced these immigrants' dispersal and isolation. Once poor farmers in St. Lucia, they now found themselves split into tiny groups, confronting an ecosystem with which they had no experience. By the time the St. Lucians arrived in the mining centers of the interior (particularly, Benzdorp, downstream from Maripasoula), gold extraction had become mainly an individualistic pursuit, reinforcing the pattern of emigration from St. Lucia, which had been largely solitary.

The first wave of West Indian emigrants arrived in French Guiana around 1880-90. In their homeland, these people had belonged to the most disadvantaged sector – sugar workers, day laborers, and the unemployed. In 1936, 85 per cent of the 4,400 miners in the interior of French Guiana were British West Indians. Today, when St. Lucians in Maripasoula are asked about why they came to Guiana, they assert that there was no work at home and that in order to survive they simply had to leave. Some only came to French Guiana after having been seasonal workers in various Caribbean islands – Guadeloupe, St. Vincent, Trinidad, or the Dominican Republic. Between 1938 and 1948, there was a massive influx of St. Lucians into the Inini-Tampok region. But by 1945, when Maripasoula was set up as a French administrative center, the whole region's population numbered no more than 952, and the village itself counted only 48. The great majority of the immigrants had by then already returned home, and those who remained were going off to establish villages and isolated homesteads, particularly along the gold creeks of the Great Inini, Waki, and Tampok rivers, under a special statute accorded the Territory of Inini.³ Certain villages, such as Maraudeur, Dorlin, and La Greve, were almost entirely peopled by St. Lucians. Wherever gold was exploited, miners had to feed themselves by growing crops on land cleared in the forest. These villagers obtained their other necessities from river traders who peddled their wares from St. Laurent to the villages upstream. Such villages served as a base for the prospectors but provided them little sense of community. And this is why, after the decline of the gold market, the onset of World War II, and the gradual depletion of the gold deposits, the miners abandoned them – either for the coast or for the new administrative centers such as Maripasoula.

In 1976, there were 139 Creoles in Maripasoula, nearly half of whom were over 50 years old. For most St. Lucians in French Guiana, Maripasoula

represented a relatively stable stop after a prolonged period of moving among the various gold-mining centers scattered along the upstream creeks. Although contact with the French administration was strictly on an individual basis, there was a strong sense of belonging to a distinct group. In effect, the administrative center served as a kind of relay station between the hinterland and the coast, an anchorage for various relatively mobile populations. On the one hand, young Creole men and women, whose fathers were gold prospectors, found jobs in Maripasoula, in the tertiary sector. On the other hand, there were a number of Boni Maroons, who came to Maripasoula to seek similar work, get health care, and engage in trade.

In 1982, the entire *commune* of Maripasoula, including its outlying Indian villages, had 1,007 inhabitants. The ethnic breakdown was: Creoles, 154; Boni Maroons, 476; Djuka Maroons, 30; Wayana Indians, 288; Europeans, 30; others (mainly, Brazilians and Haitians), 29.⁴ In Creole conceptual topography, the Boni live on the fringes of the *commune* of Maripasoula, "way up there," while the Wayana live even further away, being everywhere "in the far off." The Indians have their own territory; the rain forest is their domain. The Wayanas only "come down" to Maripasoula long enough to fill up their outboard-motor gas tanks, take part in village *fêtes*, or to sell fish.

Although this small community is an administrative center, its inhabitants split it into two areas conceptually. The higher part, known as "the Mountain," is inhabited by the Boni, whose traditional villages are Agode, Kotika, Assissi, Loka, Papaiston, Kormontibo, Lape, and L'Enfant Perdu; the lower part, called "the Savannah," is for the most part inhabited by Creoles and Europeans. It is there that the post office and town hall are located, as well as the church, which is off by the river bank.

The former prospectors in Maripasoula are those who were unable to return to St. Lucia. After the gold rush had ended, the "losers" felt they could not return to their island home without the coveted treasure. Their retreat to the interior villages of French Guiana was seen by them as something they were forced to do. When they discuss their current situation, they stress two things: their common identity, forged in a shared past as gold prospectors and forest trekkers, and their insular origin. Before this retreat, they had no permanent or stable ties to a village. Each time they moved and scattered, they would join up with others elsewhere. At every Creole settlement in the interior, miners would meet up with people born in the St. Lucian towns of Vieux Fort, Gros Ilet, and Micoud. The *fêtes* of "the Rose" and "the Daisy", with their dances and their public offerings of gold, served to revive the prospectors' old ties, but this would last only for a brief season. Today, the whole network of rivers and creeks

is dotted with abandoned landing places; former settlements, now overrun by vegetation, show hardly a trace of having once been thriving centers, except for their cemeteries and occasional Dutch gin bottles. Today, the last gold prospectors' nostalgia for life in the rain forest complements that for their island of birth. The rain forest allowed this mobile community to pursue insularity and in a sense, the dense, vast vegetation may have replaced for them the ocean's immensity. Yet their island of birth, so often mentioned and evoked, remains the ultimate determinant of their identity. These Creole St. Lucians remain in their own minds subjects of Her Britannic Majesty – as they themselves say, "*Neg angle apre bondye*."

THE TRAVELS OF DERIK PINEL

Born in 1920 in Micoud, a town on the Atlantic coast of St. Lucia, Derik Pinel's departure for South America, at age 16, was due to his mother's decision to go and live with her brother who was already in French Guiana. He went back only once to St. Lucia, for a month's stay. In talking about this trip, he showed me five postcards that he keeps as precious souvenirs. He has no letters or pictures of either friends or family on the island. In French Guiana, he first settled in St. Georges de l'Oyapock, then in Regina; he next worked in the Comte region. Beginning in 1950 when he was thirty, he worked in various mining centers along the upper Maroni: Bois Blanc, Grigel, and Maraudeur. In 1956, after spending two years in Dorlin (Little Inini), he settled in Maripasoula, which at the time had 56 inhabitants. He chose to live in the town itself for, although he was employed at the Benzdorp mine, the administration and weather station also gave him occasional work.

Derik Pinel considers himself a prospector and farmer. He farms a plot of land to the southwest of Maripasoula, in a productive growing area, and works alone as a gold prospector on the Maxime Creek, near the mouth of the Inini River. He leaves for his prospecting site Monday morning and returns Saturday night, paddling for half a day each way. He has built himself a hut there, but his real home is in Maripasoula – a stable base from which he organizes his other activities. Apart from trips to his plot of land in the forest and his work site near the creek, Derik Pinel rarely travels. Although he has had conjugal relations with five different women, he now lives alone; all six of his children are either in St. Laurent or Cayenne. The alternation between his two main activities, gold prospecting and farming, is flexible. His enjoyment of treks away from the village is balanced by his taste for sedentary life within his domestic

space. He hunts only in the daytime, like most other Creoles; the Boni and Wayana prefer to hunt at night. This hunting is linked to the protection of his garden, since he kills and eats mainly those animals that destroy the crops (agouti, small rodents, and so on). He fishes and hunts on Saturday afternoons, on his way back from the Maxime Creek worksite.

If we consider his allocation of time, the diversity of his activities, and the distances he travels, it becomes clear that Derik Pinel has a strong preference for prospecting. He complains frequently about not having more time for gold seeking. Farming his plot of land demands long stretches of time. And although hunting and fishing provide him with valuable food, he sees these as purely supplementary activities, carried out only on his way to do something else. Household activities, including leisure, are viewed as time fillers. Living alone, he does all his own cooking and laundry. During our conversations I often had the impression that something about his planning of activities was escaping me. For example, he would leave for his plot of land at a time when he had planned to go to the creek. The extreme individualism of his daily life allows him to be spontaneous in his activities.

An early riser, Derik Pinel begins his day, when at home, by saying a prayer at his personal altar. After a breakfast of *kwak* (roasted cassava flour) and coffee, he leaves the house around 8:30 for his field, with a shoulder bag, a machete, and a shotgun. He returns between three and four o'clock and prepares his lunch: *kwak*, rice, and meat or fish with sauce. Often he eats leftovers from the previous night. Towards evening, he shells corn, meets with friends, and sometimes serves as a barber. Occasionally he weaves vegetable fiber hats or knapsacks, which he sells to passing tourists. He normally goes to bed around ten o'clock, after having eaten alone and chatted with some neighbors. The community comes together only at *fetes*. On such occasions Derik Pinel goes to the village dances and helps put up the stands and shelters for the vendors.

HIS FIELD AND ITS UPKEEP

Since the age of 21, Derik Pinel has always prepared at least one new field a year; some years, he clears two or three. His smallest is about 50 ares, the largest 1-1/2 hectares. In 1983, he was farming a field located four kilometers from the village, bordered by those of other farmers. Like all Creoles, he was practicing a system of slash-and-burn farming. Each year he clears and plants a new section of primary forest; at the same time he continues to harvest crops from fields he had cleared up to three

years earlier. Other than occasional help in felling trees, he does all the burning, planting, and weeding himself. The produce is his alone and it supplies him with the bulk of his food.

Derik Pinel likes his field to be well delineated, with clear-cut angles. The best land, he says, is flat, but when an area is slightly sloping, he uses it to advantage by planting dasheen, which grows better in places where there is constant humidity and small running creeks. Each year, when he explores for a new field site, he checks the condition of the soil. If it is soft and black, it is good. Favorable farming areas are also identified by the kinds of trees that grow there, such as balata, cedar, kapoc, and wacapou. Preparing the land takes place in the dry season, between August and early November. Derik Pinel consults with the farmers who have adjacent fields and sometimes they fell the trees together. In such a case, after collectively clearing the land, individual plots are distributed, with their boundaries marked by rows of sugar cane or by banana trees. Begun in early September, the felling of trees is carried out with no special ritual. In order to gain access to the trunks, they first cut down vines and tall weeds with machetes. They use axes to fell the trees, and when several trees stand close together, one of them is felled in such a way that it brings down the others with it. It takes about fifteen days of work, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., to clear the field completely.

About a month after the trees have been felled, Derik Pinel sets fire to his field, producing ashes to fertilize the crops. He does this during the hottest hours of the day to accelerate burning, setting fires in different places with the aim of "cleaning and heating up the soil." If the burning is incomplete, he makes a *bukan* or pile of slowly burning branches and uses the concentrated ashes as fertilizer for banana trees. Four or five days after burning, when the ashes have barely cooled, he sows the first seeds (which have been kept in his kitchen from preceding harvests): watermelon, cucumber, and okra. The slope of a field influences the placement of plants, but no other patterning is apparent. The time of sowing is based on the phases of the moon. All of Maripasoula's Creoles follow the lunar calendar, unlike the Wayana and Boni. They say that everything that grows above the soil should be planted two days before the full moon, while anything that grows underground should be planted between the full moon and the last days of the waning moon. The planting period can last until the end of December; the entire area that was burned is sown. By this time, the watermelons and cucumbers have already begun to yield. From January to March, the plot of land requires several weedings; these are carried out with a machete and the weeds are left on the ground. Unlike the Boni, Creoles never do weeding by hand. By the end of July,

yams, sweet potatoes, and other root crops can be harvested. Henceforth, the garden produces continuously. For example, cassava planted a year and a half earlier is still actively harvested. The cultivated field is in effect a granary, a reservoir for future harvesting, to be exploited according to the needs and tastes of the moment. There is never any hurry to harvest, and harvesting is carried out simultaneously with other activities – weeding, protection from predators, and so on.

The cultivated field is at once the focus of subsistence, the source of raw materials for social exchange, and the locus of central Creole values. The management of a field remains an individualistic enterprise. The produce is rarely shared with others and is often even left in the field unharvested. From a certain perspective, it may seem surprising that a field so vast and with so many different kinds of crops supplies only one person. Derik Pinel claims that he would be able to feed sixty people with what he grows. But because all the farmers harvest similar crops at the same time, it is difficult for him to dispose of the surplus. And the absence of a market and means of transporting the produce to the coast make this surplus growing even less justified in purely economic terms. But the attitude of Creole farmers reflects a more general propensity for accumulation, which applies to the size of the fields, the number of fields simultaneously cultivated, the number of crops, and the varieties of any one crop. There seems to be a decided desire to accumulate and amass, stemming in part from a fear of shortages, which can be offset only by a kind of ostentatious overproduction run wild.

There is no collective effort involved in either the production or the handling of crops, nor are there agricultural fairs, festivals, or markets of any sort. But even with production and accumulation an individual matter, consumption and distribution could be handled collectively, as was once the case for gold. Every prospector recalls with nostalgia the festive times when cartridges loaded with pellets of gold were fired into the air by men whose community ties lasted only from the discovery of gold at a particular site until its depletion.⁵ But subsistence farming seems to have been unsuccessful in doing what gold prospecting did for a time – creating meaningful, if short-lived, communities. Today, for the last surviving prospectors, the collective pattern of consumption and distribution is a thing of the past. All that remains is the desire to accumulate, without any organized means to absorb the surplus. Production has become an end in itself, a way of showing what one is capable of doing; the ideal is to keep producing even if half of the crop rots in the ground. “*Lo-a toune dachin*.” (“Gold has been replaced by root crops”), people say bitterly.

THE HOUSE AND ITS GARDENS

Within the Creole universe, the house and its surrounding garden (*jaden bokay*) are contrasted with the forest and its provision grounds (*viv te*). The house and its plants are intimately linked, and the plants are quite different from those off in the fields. While vegetables are the main crops in the fields, the flora around the house consists essentially of fruit trees and decorative plants. Derik Pinel chose to locate his house in the lower part of the village, near the main crossroads. Before, the area had been nothing but forest; everything had to be cleared with machete and axe. It is in the house that produce from the fields, as well as hunting and fishing kills, is stored and processed. It is there, too, that gold is melted down, weighed, and stored. And it is in the village that social relationships among neighbors are formed and played out.

The front of the house is clearly visible, in contrast to the sides, which are hidden by dense plant growth. Stretching around the front and one side is a porch. Set slightly back from the street, the front of the house appears open, accessible and hospitable. The five steps in front lead to the porch. But as soon as one crosses the threshold, one enters a different environment, in which the surrounding plant growth mutes the sunlight. The resemblance between house and garden is striking; just as there is a profusion of plant life outside, there is an accumulation of domestic objects, furniture, and dishes inside. Both would seem to reflect the same tendency to amass things in cluttered profusion.

Derik Pinel first built the house over a period of four months in 1962; it consisted of panels with a roof-support made of tightly woven vines and covered with *way* leaves. In 1968, he solidified the walls and put on a corrugated metal roof, doing all the work himself. His explicit goal was for the house to be "just the way it was designed in my head"; he used no written plan or blueprint. He also denied that it followed a St. Lucian model. It does indeed seem larger and more spacious than the houses of his native village, which are lined up in rows, one right next to the other, and devoid of surrounding gardens. In addition to doing all the construction work, carpentry, cabinetry, roofing, and painting, he also made the furniture: tables, chairs, stools, cots, and shelves, except for two metal frame beds. In talking about it, he expressed regret that others did not ask him to do this sort of work for them more often. Each room has one or several beds, even though his visitors rarely stay overnight. In terms of sharing his house with a woman, he said, "I have always lived alone. For thirteen years I have been alone. I lived with a woman and her two children for five years, but it didn't work out. They are now

in Cayenne. I lived with the mother of another son for three months, but I really can't say I've ever had a family life, neither here nor in fact anywhere else."

The front yard with its pleasant, decorative garden, is where Derik Pinel meets with friends and neighbors. This hospitable area is unique to the Creoles of Maripasoula and its outlying areas; neither the Boni nor the Wayana have frontyard gardens. The front porch is more like a storeroom than a place for relaxing with friends. It is cluttered with all kinds of things: cartons, sacks, empty bottles, old tin pans, a corn grinder, and so on. In contrast, the flower garden is pleasant and inviting, a profusion of hibiscus bushes, frangipangis, various crotons, some cannas, and other bushes. On either side of the steps are garden patches, outlined by bottles stuck in the ground, where various predominately yellow and violet flowers grow. This ornamental arrangement seems to be purposeful. Along the edges of the porch Derik Pinel has placed enamel basins and tin cans with plants growing in them.

The most common medicinal plants also grow below the porch, within reach of anyone from the outside. Derik Pinel says that he did not plant them, that they "grew all by themselves," and that they belong to everyone. He knows each one by name: *chardon beni*, *the-pays*, *pied-poule*, and so forth. The presence of these medicinal plants helps us understand the role of the "decorative" plants, for their ornamental function is complemented by a protective one; "these plants chase away evil spirits." Apart from the bushes, there is no barrier between street and frontyard. The category of "decorative plants" thus includes both those that are medicinal and those that are considered to offer protection against supernatural dangers.

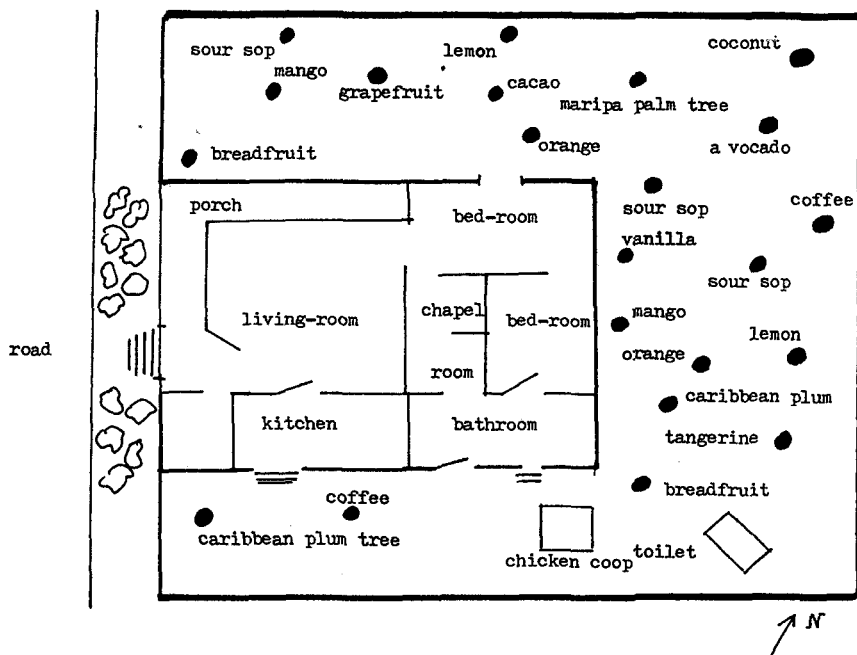
To protect one's house, you must go to a crossroads, look to the right, then to the left, make a cross in the middle of the intersection, then go back home, make a cross behind the door, as well as near the window of your bedroom, make a cross on your broomstick, turn it upside down, then leave it like that for three days before using it.

The rear of the house is surrounded by fruit trees; this part of the garden shares the feeling of intimacy that exists in the house's interior. All of the light that enters the house is filtered through its leaves. This garden and the house are intertwined rather than each being a distinct entity. The back garden is both a planted area and a kind of scrap yard, with piles of old boards, pieces of building materials, empty crates, and other objects left haphazardly among the fallen, rotting fruits. These scraps of materials and the ground vegetation seem almost to be vying for space.

The image of an insular dwelling is recognized by its owner, who compares his house to Noah's ark because "everything grows well there and there is everything that one could need."

What struck me most about the garden and house was the owner's disinclination to disturb anything, his insistence on leaving everything to take on its own pattern without intervention. Planted several years before the house was built, Derik Pinel's garden grows without any upkeep, trimming, or fertilizer. He has always been content to pick whatever happens to grow. This way of using the garden is based on an idea of exploiting those fruits that, with God's help, grow there. The result is a baroque, undisciplined profusion, characterized by its density and excess. I present here a diagram showing the locations of the principal trees.

Derik Pinel's house and location of his fruit trees



The basic difference between the two gardens is that the one in front is exposed to the sun. It is there that the various exchanges take place (of greetings, news, and objects), that he observes passing street life, and that he engages in activities such as fiber-weaving. It is also there that medicinal and decorative plants constitute, as we have already seen, both

a protection and an effective link between outsiders and the lived habitat. The medicinal plants in fact benefit others, establishing reciprocal relationships since, in the Creole view, healing should always take place in the context of social relationships – “one should never heal oneself.”

THE HOUSE

The front door leads to the main room which serves as both living and dining room, with a table and chairs in the center. This living space is an extension of the front of the house and is lit in part by light coming through it. A few pieces of furniture are ranged along the walls of the room. The floor is made of boards and there is no ceiling to hide the roof beams. This room leads into a guest room and, via a hallway, to the bedroom and kitchen. The kitchen has several shelves where dishes, pots, and pans are displayed. The wooden sink – a kind of overhanging crate – extends past the wall and drains into the garden. Nearby is a two-burner charcoal stove made of concrete, as well as some tables and benches piled high with jars, scales, and various recipients. Produce from the field is stored under the main table; the machete is always placed near the door. There is a certain unhealthy air about the place: the boards around the sink are mouldy and slippery, as are the steps leading to the garden, and the chickens often go up and down the steps pecking at grains of rice or corn. At the opposite end of the kitchen there is a small hallway that leads to the most private part of the house, the “chapel.” It is hardly ever light there, as the window is always kept shut. Inside, two partitions close off a small space, like a closet, with a multi-colored curtain made from plastic ribbons hanging in the entrance. This chapel contains an altar – a high table holding several statuettes, some artificial flowers, prayer books, notebooks, and a large candle-holder. It is in this alcove that Derik Pinel reads a prayer each morning and evening. A candle stays lit during the prayer and on certain special days – Fridays to celebrate the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sundays in celebration of the Holy Trinity, and Mondays for the Holy Spirit. The other protective saints are represented by figurines – St. Joseph, “patron of carpenters and all those who work with wood”; St. Anthony, “protector of material riches, especially gold”; and St. Christopher, “protector of all those who travel on the river.” Other statuettes, tablemats, and candles help to create a spiritual space. The alcove effectively reflects the individualistic nature of Derik Pinel’s worship.

The bedroom, which adjoins the chapel, contains some shelves, a bed, and a bedside table. It opens directly onto the shower, with its buckets

and laundry. From there, a few steps lead into the garden, with its chicken coop and outhouse.

The principle that we glossed as "accumulation" – a mass of clutter and profusion – applies to the outdoor spaces of field and garden as well as to the rooms of the house. And it extends to other areas of life as well. One could argue that the Creole's favorite meal reflects the same aesthetic – a plate heaped with rice or *kwak*, fish or meat in sauce, dasheen, bananas, sweet potatoes, and kidney beans, all vying for space. Similarly, it is the jumble of saints on the domestic altar who collectively provide succor. Nonetheless, this principle of accumulation is not related to any collective or communitarian ideal. Derik Pinel's life – like that of other Creole prospectors – is marked by a determined individualism. And his lived environment, as we have seen, also reflects a decided disinclination to manipulate the interior or exterior space.

Derik Pinel's house and garden share a number of features with certain insular Caribbean environments: shingled roofs, handcarved decorations and friezes, beds made of boards, and the arrangement of flowering plants. However, the parallels are less striking than the differences. In terms of size, French Guiana Creole houses are vast, spacious, and often built on piles as high as 1.5 meters. The houses, aligned regularly within the village, are characteristically surrounded by a plant perimeter consisting of a wide variety of species. And the settlement pattern of Creole houses and stores, strung along a river bank, with their extensive kitchen sinks, are reminiscent of the Caboclo settlements that dot the shores of Amazonian tributaries in Northern Brazil. It would seem that the Amazonian environment has given St. Lucian immigrants a new concept of space and movement.

In fact, the entire organization of Creole activities, even more than the habitat itself, is characteristically Amazonian. The layout of the fields, the techniques of slash and burn, and even the crops that are planted, emerge from this Amerindian universe, which the Creoles have drawn upon and interpreted in their own way.

To live in Maripasoula is to be part of a broader pattern that exists all up and down the river – small, split up communities that are uncertain about their present status, without a deep, common past, and confronting rather than joining together with one another. For gold prospectors, constantly in pursuit of new sites to exploit, the quest itself often became the focal point of their lives, and all landscapes became equally familiar and unfamiliar. But at the same time, their attachment to a particular house, built with their own hands, was very real. Moving among the placers,

the forest gardens, and the house, French Guiana's last prospectors have developed a special rhythm of life.

Friday morning, December 11, 1982. Woke up rested, thanks be to God. Said my prayers, drank my coffee, and got ready to leave for work. I thought that, God willing, this might be one of the last days of gold work for the year. I worked well yesterday and put away the tools. On the way home caught two fish. Arrived in camp, heated the gold: 8 grams. Not so good but, since there isn't much left, it's all right. In two weeks, got 14 grams. I'm going to the field to prepare the earth for planting. I had to leave off working because of the rains. In the evening, I cooked dinner, took a shower, went up to Constant's, prepared some vines for ropes, said my prayers, and then to sleep.

NOTES

1. This sketch of a man and his lived environment is intended as an antidote to recent books such as *Caribbean Style* (Slesin et al. 1985, reviewed in vol. 61, pp. 90-91, of this journal), in which peoples' homes tend to be abstracted from their presence in them, and in which a focus on the rich and famous crowds out the lifeways of the great bulk of Caribbean people.
2. The Maroni region was inhabited only by Amerindians – Wayana (Carib) and Emerillons (Tupi) – until the last quarter of the 18th century, when some 300 Aluku (Boni) Maroons settled along the Lawa River. In 1870, there was an influx of people from the coast – French Guianese Creoles, West Indians, and a few Europeans – who came up the river in search of gold. The height of this movement was in 1901 when gold deposits were discovered in the Inini region (Lasserre, Grenand et al. 1979: Plate 20).
3. Founded in 1930 and placed under the authority of a governor, this Territory granted a de facto autonomy to the "tribal" Amerindian and Maroon populations. In 1968, this special legislation was eliminated when all of French Guiana became a Department d'Outre-Mer.
4. These figures were furnished by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, Service Centrale des Enquetes et Etudes Statistiques, Paris (1975), and D.D.A., Service Statistiques, Cayenne (March 1982).
5. The perceived correlation between the abundance of gold and the communities that have grown up around it is deeply entrenched in the prospectors' way of thought. They are convinced that the only reason gold might ever disappear from the face of the earth would be if there were no more men in the forest to pursue it.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Narrative of a five years expedition against the revolted Negroes of Surinam in Guiana on the Wild Coast of South-America from the year 1772 to the year 1777. JOHN GABRIEL STEDMAN. Edited by Richard Price and Sally Price. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. xcvii + 708 pp. (Cloth US\$ 95.00)

John Gabriel Stedman, a late eighteenth century soldier, had the instincts of an anthropologist, a considerable talent for drawing and painting, a lively pen, and a quick temper that went with an aptitude for riotous living. From February 1773 to April 1777 he served in Suriname as an officer in a force specially recruited in Holland to protect the colonial plantations from the depredations of revolted slaves, and to destroy the settlements of runaways. An account of his experiences, first published in London in 1796, has been republished many times and in many languages, having been recognized as one of the best accounts of life in a slave colony, and a devastating exposé of the sadistic cruelty of the slave regime. A major contribution to the success of the work has been the romantic account of Stedman's love for a young mulatto slave, Joanna, and of his attempts to secure her manumission and that of their son, Johnny – an account that has, over the years, inspired plays and novels as well as secondary accounts with titles such as *Soldier in Paradise*. Most readers of this journal will be familiar with the splendid Imprint Society version of the original 1796 edition, published in 1971 with an Introduction by R.A.J. van Lier.

It has been known for some time that Stedman's original manuscript had been discovered, that it differed in important ways from the edited version published in 1796, and that Richard and Sally Price were working to make available this original, unexpurgated version. We now have the

fruits of their labor in this splendid volume, an important event in Caribbean scholarship; area specialists will want to own it, in spite of the cost. The advantage of reading Stedman's own words cannot be exaggerated. Every effort has been made to reproduce the original in every detail and in spite of its idiosyncratic expressions, odd spelling and grammatical errors, there is a subtly different feel to this narrative, making it more vivid and authentic, quite apart from the inclusion of important material that was excised from the earlier version. Richard and Sally Price, and the Johns Hopkins University Press, are to be congratulated on a most successful piece of restoration.

Stedman died in 1797, only a short time after the publication of his work, leaving not only the original manuscript version of the book, completed in 1790, but an extensive journal kept while he was in Suriname, and other manuscript notes, all now housed in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. The fascinating story of how they got there and an account of what they contain is provided in a highly informative Introduction to the present edition by Richard Price and Sally Price, an Introduction showing that one other piece of historical and literary detective work remains to be completed.

As the Prices point out, "The text consists of a half-dozen interwoven strands – the romance with Joanna [the slave daughter of a Dutch planter] and his efforts to gain her freedom; the military campaigns against the rebel slaves; his relations with other soldiers, particularly his commanding officer Fourgeoud; the description and investigation of exotic flora and fauna; the description of Amerindian and African slave life; and, most important, the description and analysis of relations between planters and slaves – all structured by a chronological framework taken from his Suriname diaries" [p. XV].

Stedman wrote this narrative some ten years after the events described (having moved to Devon from Holland in 1784), in an English atmosphere where the slave trade and slavery itself were topics of intense debate. Not surprisingly he crafted his descriptions of that institution, and of his relationship with Joanna, his "Surinam wife," to suit his position in relation to those debates. Therefore the material contained in his "Suriname diaries," much of it written at the time of, or soon after, the events it describes, is a vital link in the interpretation of the narrative. A version of these diaries was published in 1962 by The Mitre Press in London, and edited by Stanbury Thompson but it is even less reliable than the 1796 edition of Stedman's *Narrative*, and it is to be hoped that a definitive version, based on the originals in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota, will soon be published. Even in its present form Thompson's

edition of Stedman's journal provides illuminating checks on the events described in the *Narrative*.

There are many accounts of life in the West India slave colonies, written by planters, doctors, estate overseers, missionaries and visitors, some of them far more learned than Stedman's but none more credible concerning the texture of relationships between the races, which were at once barbarically cruel and of the greatest intimacy. He is unusual in his very explicit statements about the value and validity of African religion, customs and physical beauty, and in the relativism of his cultural sensibility. Although the *Narrative* clearly romanticizes his relationship with Joanna which, from the journal, we know started as the usual arrangement entered into between Stedman and Joanna's mother for her to be his "housekeeper" (Joanna was then fifteen years old), it is also clear that he developed an uncommon attachment to her and that he respected her extensive kinship connections. From the journal in particular we get some idea of the extensive exchange of gifts, between Europeans, between slaves, and even between slaves and Europeans, and Stedman was involved in these exchange networks. How many 18th century Europeans would refer to a paramour's mother's brother – a slave – as "Uncle"? It is evident, too, that he was regarded by his fellow officers, and by most of the European colonists, as being unduly concerned for his "Surinam wife" and her child. His mess mates made fun of him, saying that he should do as they do and remember that if children are slaves they will be well provided for, and if they die – so what? "Keep your Sighs in your Belly and your Money in your Pocket" [p. 289]. He did not of course. Although he left Joanna and the boy behind when he returned to Europe in 1777 (and by February 1782 he had married an 18 year old Dutch woman), he did arrange for their manumission, and when Joanna died in November of 1782 he sent for his son and brought him up as part of his family.

The Prices' Introduction to this volume contains much interesting comment on the military campaigns against the Bush Negroes in which Stedman was actively engaged during his four years in Suriname. They seem to have been singularly badly managed, and Stedman appeared to have more respect for the rebel leaders than for his own superiors. The original edition contained some 80 illustrations from engravings made from Stedman's own sketches and water colours. At least sixteen of them were made by William Blake and have been recognized as among his best work. Richard and Sally Price show convincingly that Stedman was much more than a passable artist whose work was improved by the engravers; indeed his original drawings and paintings, mostly lost, were probably more interesting than the ones we see. One painting found among the pages

of the manuscript is reproduced here and is remarkable for its detail and authentic rendering of the tropical forest scene; by the time the engraver had finished with it, the Suriname forest had become more like rural England. Unfortunately, the reproductions are the one weak aspect of this volume. The Prices acknowledge the work of the person who made the photographs of the original eighteenth century plates, noting the great difficulty involved, but the results are disappointing – except for the two colour plates, which are excellent. Stedman's sketch maps have been reduced from the original fold-out sheets to make them fit on one page, rendering them almost indecipherable, while many of the engravings are so dark that much of the detail is lost.

Still, this is a minor complaint. The real value of this edition is in the text, which should be read from beginning to end, and in conjunction with the journal. The fairly extensive notes on the text are collected at the end of the book and have to be read separately since there is no cross reference in the text itself apart from the page number. In this they follow the pattern set by Van Lier in the 1971 edition. A list of flora and fauna identifications, and of sources for Stedman's literary citations are further evidence of the care lavished on this work, which makes the absence of an index all the more regrettable, and only partially compensated for by the extensive notes and appendixes. An abridged paperback version is in preparation, and it will be interesting to see what is left out.

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Reize naar Surinamen, door den Capitein John Gabriel Stedman, met plaaten en kaarten, naar het Engelsch, Jos Fontaine (ed.) Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1987. 176 pp. (Cloth f 59,50)

This glossy adaptation of Stedman's 1796 *Narrative*, underwritten by the Suriname Aluminum Company, is intended for a broad Dutch-speaking audience. But the more knowledgeable among such people – Surinamers and Dutch Suriname buffs alike – are likely to be disappointed. The editor's introduction, only several paragraphs long, makes no pretence to scholarship and fails to contextualize the edition; and it is difficult to divine the intent of the tedious 17-page English "summary" that ends the volume, a kind of trot or bowdlerized retelling of the narrative which anachronistically adds jocular editorial comments ("with his usual luck," "naturally," "as so often happened in Guiana, bad omens were observed") and imputes motives and thoughts to the actors ("The blackest sign of all, as Stedman thought," "the old man cunningly said").

It may be worth noting that this edition is an abridgment of the 1799-1800 Dutch edition that (despite its claim to be "naar het Engelsch") was itself a translation/abridgment of the 1798 French translation/abridgment of the 1796 English first edition. The text from which the current editor made his own abridgment already represented a "double translation/abridgment" of Stedman's book, with textual cuts motivated in part by political concerns in Paris and Amsterdam at the end of the eighteenth century. Although the expressed intent of this new edition is to make readily available "historically important information about Suriname's *land en volk*," the chapters and sections omitted wholesale include those devoted to describing Indians and African slaves, and much of Stedman's detailed natural history of the country. What remains is largely an account of military campaigns and, of course, Stedman's romance with Joanna (which has long held a complex, affect-laden place in the colonial consciousness of that portion of the Dutch population concerned with Suriname).

When the first edition of the *Narrative* was published in 1796, the great bulk of the print run was produced on plain paper, with black and white plates; the rest of the run was issued on larger paper with the plates carefully colored by hand. The 1806 second edition was issued only with black and white plates. When such copies appear colored today, it is because the engravings were coloured many decades later, to fit contemporary tastes and raise the value of the copy; such nineteenth-century "re-colored" copies bear little resemblance to the 1796 originals. Unfortunately, the color plates

reproduced here by De Walburg Pers (only about half of those in Stedman's *Narrative* and almost all radically miniaturized) – which are clearly an important part of this edition's *raison d'être* – were made from the 1806 second edition (perhaps the copy in the Suriname Museum), colored only in the mid- or late nineteenth century, rather than from one of the 1796 hand-colored originals that survive in major libraries.

In the days when the spiritual (and in some cases biological) descendants of Stedman's Maroon adversaries are engaged in a bloody war against the military government of Suriname – a war with both ideological and strategic parallels to that of two centuries before – Suralco's prettified book with its faintly antiquarian flavor seems like something out of an edenic, wished-for colonial past. By my reckoning, this is the 24th published edition based on Stedman's 1796 classic. Coming so soon after the death of R.A.J. van Lier, whose 1971 English-language edition of Stedman set the standard for modern scholarship (and who later introduced an *unabridged* reprint of the 1799-1800 Dutch edition, published by Emmering), this newest version almost moves me to join in J.G.S.'s own mournful paint, expressed in the Preface to his book, "& with a Sigh exclaim in the Language of Eugenious – Alas, poor Stedman."

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The overthrow of colonial slavery, 1776-1848. ROBIN BLACKBURN. London and New York: Verso, 1988. 560 pp. (Cloth, US\$ 45.00, UK 27.95; Paper US\$ 19.95)

Economic growth and the ending of the transatlantic slave trade. DAVID ELTIS. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. xiii + 418 pp. (Cloth, US\$ 39.95)

Scholarly interest in the rise and fall of African slavery in the Americas shows few signs of abating, despite the effusion during the last several decades of a truly remarkable literature on slavery. Indeed, the recent

centennial celebrations of the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Brazil as well as the forthcoming bicentennial celebration of the slave revolution in Saint Domingue and quincentennial celebration of Columbus' epoch-making voyage have, if anything, provided ample incentives for further research and writing. As angles have multiplied and visions have broadened, slavery scholarship has come to represent much of the best work in comparative, quantitative, and interdisciplinary history. At present, no serious student of slavery in the United States can afford to approach what used to be called American Negro slavery as only a national problem. These days, to attempt a comprehensive history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and American slavery requires considerable versatility and courage. Properly done, it demands detailed knowledge of the interconnected histories of four continents for more than four centuries. Properly done, it would have to be placed within the context of Western European expansion and colonialism, the elaboration of a world market, and capitalist development. From the perspective of world history, or of merely the history of the Americas, one of the most salient features of the "peculiar institution" was not its peculiarity in the sense of being uncommon but rather its ubiquitousness. Slavery was "a status," as James Boswell pointed out in 1791 in his famous *Life of Samuel Johnson*, "which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued."

Some of the most ambitious and exciting work currently within the general field of slavery studies, as the books by David Eltis and Robin Blackburn attest, attempts to explain precisely why the trans-Atlantic slave trade and American slavery came to an end. Abolition, wherever it occurred, not only entailed profound and often violent economic and social change but reflected an equally profound and, ultimately, world-capturing shift in moral attitudes as well. Slavery emerged as the central labor form in Brazil and the circum-Caribbean region after the Western European expansion; it had been sanctioned around the world from time immemorial, largely as an extreme form of dependency in societies that were perceived to be organic structures of dependencies. Yet it was abolished everywhere in the Americas in about a hundred years, ending finally by legislation in Brazil in 1888. Why men – and women – chose not to continue a status that "in all ages God has sanctioned" must thus rank with the most important events in the making of the modern world.

The world's first organized movement to abolish slavery began in Boswell's native Britain during his lifetime. It would lead to the abolition of the slave trade to Britain's colonies in 1807, to a program of gradual emancipation in 1833, and eventually to a global antislavery crusade. Yet in the previous century, the century of the greatest volume of the trans-

Atlantic slave trade, Britain had profited by exporting the majority of more than 6,000,000 African slaves to the Americas and by importing cheap slave-grown produce.

Explanations of this great paradox have ranged across a spectrum from extreme idealism to extreme materialism. More than a half-century ago Reginald Coupland, who has come to exemplify the idealist extreme – but who actually allowed for a more complex interpretation than has been commonly supposed – emphasized the role played by a small elite band of politically-astute, virtuous and high-minded men who attempted to remedy a monstrous evil. He concluded *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* (1933: 251) by quoting the now notorious judgment of Irish historian William E. Lecky, that “the unweary, unostentatious, and inglorious crusade of England against Slavery may probably be regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations.”

Eric Williams, author of the classic *Capitalism and slavery* (1944) openly rebuked Coupland and his fellow members of the humanitarian school for ignoring the economic context in which British abolitionist and antislavery policies were pursued. The slave trade and slavery were an integral part of an economic system, and an “economic system is overthrown only when it ceases to function. Economics, not humanity or morality, would be the decisive factor.” Not until the British slave system became unprofitable, according to Williams (1940: 60-106), did the humanitarians become more than “a few isolated voices crying in the wilderness.”

Recent scholarship on the ending of American slavery has tended to eschew any explanation that would focus narrowly on either humanitarian ideals or economics and to argue instead for a complex of cultural, economic, and political factors. British humanitarianism can no longer be reduced to the masterly propaganda or false philanthropy of a rising class of industrial capitalists. To be sure, what it meant to be human was redefined during the British Industrial Revolution in ways that generated a powerful middle-class antislavery sensibility, and in ways that ultimately proved compatible with the needs of British capitalism. But this process unfolded on a broad, ever-shifting terrain of political and ideological contention that involved the beliefs and initiatives of many social groups on both sides of the Atlantic.

Abundant evidence has surfaced during the last decade or so that economics in a strict accounting sense had little to do with the transition from slave to free labor anywhere in the Americas. In every case, it appears, plantation slavery continued to be a profitable investment at the moment of abolition. David Eltis' book brings powerful additional support for

this position. No better single volume exists on the economics of the ending of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It will be read and debated for many years to come. A densely-packed work, both original and synthetic, with seven statistical appendices and more than fifty tables and graphs, it is a virtual encyclopedia of information on the profitability and structure of the nineteenth-century trade, the productivity of plantation slave labor, and the number, age, sex, mortality, and origins of the victims of the Middle Passage. Few, if any, researchers have done a more careful and thorough job in mining the voluminous records of the British Foreign Office, the single most important source of information on the nineteenth-century trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Those not in command of the recent literature may find Eltis' book surprising and downright unsettling, as if in each chapter he took an almost perverse delight in slaughtering sacred cows of historical interpretation. Even though the trans-Atlantic slave trade was the largest forced migration in world history (not until the mid-nineteenth century did the total number of white migrants to the Americas exceed the total number of black migrants), Eltis concludes that at least for the nineteenth century "significant depopulation [in Africa] was unlikely" at the macro level (p. 67). As large as the slave trade was, it probably did not represent a loss of more than half of one percent a year of the total West African population nor did the rate of removal exceed the rate of natural increase. Without British abolitionism, however, significant depopulation could have occurred. Economic growth had generated a burgeoning demand for plantation commodities in Western Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century. To meet the resultant demand for labor, the slave trade would have expanded. "Slaves would have been much cheaper and more intensively used in a wide range of occupations Forced African immigration into the Americas would have continued in excess of free European immigration for most of the nineteenth century and perhaps most of the 50 million or so arrivals in the Americas in the century after 1820 would have been African slaves, not free Europeans" (p. 139).

In extending the work of Seymour Drescher, Eltis reaffirms that British anti-slave trade policy destroyed the world position of the vigorous, not unprofitable, British West Indian plantation sector. In response to external demand this sector could have expanded production in certain older colonies and enjoyed an economic boom in the rich, frontier soils of more recently acquired Trinidad and in what became British Guiana. Instead, Cuba and Brazil benefited from Britain's policy of colonial econocide and sustained slave-based booms of their own. Eltis' estimates of British costs in attempting to suppress the slave trade from 1816 to 1862, largely to those

two countries, actually exceed his estimate of British profits from the slave trade from 1761 to 1807.

Eltis levels another blow at Eric Williams and his faithful by contending that "the abolition of the slave trade was of greater economic importance to Africa than it was to Europe. In neither continent, however, was it of great economic significance" (p. 73). The income generated by trade between West Africa and Western Europe accounted for only a small part of the total income of the discrete states and nations involved. Contrary to Paul Lovejoy, a leading historian of Africa, Eltis maintains that external influences such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade did not decisively transform African slavery from "a marginal type of dependency centered on lineage or kinship, where slaves were not in the first instance producers ... [to] at least primarily a productive system." Transformations did take place. Slaves who might have been exported to the Americas remained in Africa increasingly to be put to use in commodity production. But the forces driving these transformations, according to Eltis, "were markets internal to the savanna or in the forest zones rather than outside Africa" (p. 225).

In the opening section of his book, Eltis concentrates his explanation of why the British committed econocide and pursued abolitionism. Eric Williams, it seems, was both wrong and right. Capitalism had promoted and then put to death the trans-Atlantic slave trade and American slavery, not because they were unprofitable but because British capitalism had given birth to a radical new ideology. It would radiate outward, across the Atlantic, attracting adherents and decisively conditioning the specific political struggles that brought about emancipation. Regrettably, Eltis never explicitly defines this ideology. At best, he sketches those specific political struggles, in Britain and elsewhere, that would necessarily take him beyond structure to process and behavior. But he agrees with David Brion Davis that abolitionism was related to the need to legitimate an emerging system based upon free (i.e. wage) labor. What Eltis repeatedly calls "economic growth" is more precisely the self-sustained economic growth associated with the social relations of industrial capitalism and the attendant development of mass consumerism. Thus abolitionism both shaped and drew strength from the process that was redefining the relationship between capital and labor in Britain. By the end of the late eighteenth century, British wage earners were increasingly afflicted with "want creation," and British capitalists used it to expand internal markets and discipline wage-earners into greater productivity in the absence, or better said, because of the political impossibility, of extra-economic coercion. In a slight twist to Sidney Mintz's argument in *Sweetness and power* (1985) Eltis notes that such slave-grown staples as sugar "were quintessentially social and

cultural products that may be seen as forerunners of the great mass of products in modern high-income societies that are purchased in the expectation that they will satisfy nonsubsistence or psychological needs In the light of a system that relied on voluntary labor to satisfy individual wants going beyond subsistence needs, forced labor appeared not only inappropriate but counterproductive" (p. 20).

Emancipation in the Americas came to reflect ecumenical movements against slavery and not merely particularist resistance to enslavement – even as both usually converged and, at times were confounded, as slave and free colored leaders dealt with political and tactical exigencies. In the nineteenth century the British had emulators throughout the Americas and not just among "local elites," as Eltis claims. Free colored artisans, domestic slaves, and slave drivers, for example, as well as white intellectuals and planters, demonstrated receptivity to trans-Atlantic ideological currents in leading organized resistance to slavery, in Saint Domingue, Cuba, Brazil and many other countries. Bureaucrats who presided over slaveholding countries under siege referred not only to British political, military, and diplomatic pressure and the rumblings from below but to "the spirit of the century," the temper of the times. To some degree slave emancipation became a kind of acid test of whether one was civilized or not, progressive or not. After all, the dramatic ascendancy of Britain to global power in the nineteenth century had to impress many observers – from white bureaucrats in Brazil to slave dockworkers in Cuba – with the superiority of free over slave labor. For Brazil and Cuba, the two leading slave-importing countries of the nineteenth century, Eltis notes, "Abolitionist values were not organic Indigenous abolition movements notwithstanding, the ultimate ideological pressure for change came from outside their societies rather than within" (p. 148).

Robin Blackburn's learned, subtle, and wide-ranging study, *The overthrow of colonial slavery, 1776-1848*, complements Eltis' book. Like Eltis, Blackburn has a broad vision: his unit of analysis is nothing less than the trans-Atlantic world during the Age of Revolution. Unlike Eltis, he shows little interest in economics. Instead, based on a close and generally careful reading of a formidable range of secondary sources, he details the separate yet interrelated political processes that legitimated, however uneasily, capitalist social relations in Britain and led to the destruction of slavery in the Americas. He focuses on the history of British antislavery but also includes insightful chapters on the problem of slavery in the United States, the French Antilles, South America, Cuba and Brazil, with due attention to the results of the American Revolution (1776), the Saint Domingue Revolution (1791), and the Spanish American revolutions (1808-

1825). "Slavery," he concludes, "was not overthrown for economic reasons but where it became politically untenable" (p. 520).

After a condensed discussion of antislavery sources in the pre-eighteenth century Western world, Blackburn analyzes the secularizing political context of Hanoverian Britain to understand the birth of public protests against slavery. Three nonsuccessive chapters carry the story of British antislavery in stages: through rapid advances before the French Revolution, retreat before a reactionary backlash, resurgence after the collapse of the Peace of Amiens in 1803 – when the abolition of Britain's colonial slave trade became "the least controversial reform that could be undertaken" (p. 295) – to the triumphant culmination of gradual emancipation in the British colonies in 1838.

In this political narrative Blackburn suggests how important antislavery ideology was in translating capitalist power into capitalist authority in Britain. Seymour Drescher (1987: 24, 166), in his seminal work on popular abolitionism, has argued for abolitionism as a consensual movement in which "working men and women played a direct and decisive role in bringing chattel slavery to an end." The "libertarian heritage" that Drescher says informed the antislavery movement and to which "all groups subscribed" may have served as the great national force that it did because it was sufficiently flexible to contain class antagonisms and to propel reform. By combining the interests of rulers and ruled within a common discourse and shared vocabulary, abolitionism embodied substantial contradictions and diversity of meaning. In short, as national policy, it promoted domestic euphony at a time of disharmony, unity within difference, containment without control, when the traditional order was rapidly fragmenting under the pressures of industrial capitalism. Why abolitionism was receivable as an ideology across class lines is a subject Blackburn skillfully addresses.

Abolitionism, with its roots in a centuries-old popular anti-slavery reflex, also appeared to offer guarantees for the future – basically a guarantee that the enlarged circuit of capital accumulation would not simply reinforce and extend personal bondage Emancipationism was certainly compatible with ideal projections of wage labour and thus congruent with capitalist industrialisation. But the ideal of 'free labour' or 'independent labour' which abolitionism claimed to protect had popular appeal because it could also be taken to refer to the small producer, the artisan or the professional, each of whom were free to work on their own account rather than for a capitalist (p. 533).

Certainly for the specifically capitalist elements within a generalized antislavery movement, advocacy of antislavery projected a sense of unity and social responsibility that for other groups the ascendancy of laissez-

faire economics, utilitarian calculus, and possessive individualism had called into question.

Of necessity, Blackburn looks far more closely than Eltis at the contributions of religion, popular abolitionism, and the emancipationist initiatives of slaves, free people of color, and other groups in the Americas. Despite some overly romantic language about all forms of slave resistance, he appears to agree with Eugene Genovese (1979) that the slave revolution in Saint Domingue was epoch-making in its results. Among other things, it marked a turning point in the patterns of slave resistance, an integration of American slave revolts into the revolutionary politics and ideology of Europe. "Part of the grandeur of the great French Revolution is that it came to sponsor slave emancipation in the Americas; and part of the grandeur of the great Revolution in St. Domingue/Haiti is that it successfully defended the gains of the French Revolution against France itself" (p. 259). With the Saint Domingue revolution slaves engaged events in the wider world that made general emancipation inexorable. The existence of Haiti intensified the force of collective slave resistance everywhere in the Hemisphere, for, after all, existence proves possibility. Slave resistance may not have emancipated the slaves in the British West Indies, but it made points that were not lost on a restive public and Parliamentary legislators.

Among the recent entrants into the debate on the relationship between capitalism and the origins of British antislavery, Thomas Haskell (1987: 829-852) has argued that the market "had the incidental effect of expanding the sphere of causal perception within which everyday affairs proceeded, pushing people over a threshold of perception such that the most sensitive moralists among them no longer found passive sympathy an adequate response." There are many problems with this argument, and it is unlikely to survive the devastating criticism of David Brion Davis, who pointed out, among other things, that Haskell must then explain why the British and not the Dutch originated the antislavery movement and why so many middle-class women, effectively outside the market nexus, participated so prominently in the crusade.

The books by Eltis and Blackburn contain additional criticism. Few people in the nineteenth century had broader horizons, engaged in more sophisticated, long-distance market activity, and thus were better prepared to cross Haskell's perceptual threshold than the merchants involved directly or indirectly in the slave system. But, as Eltis points out with respect to British merchants resident in slaveholding countries, they "tended to adopt the attitudes of the [local] commercial environment" (p. 148). For Blackburn, the antislavery activity of the cosmopolitan Quakers emanated

less from their market activities pushing them on to humanitarianism than from the moral example of their women, coupled with their own recognition that market activity was "dulling" their "moral faculties" (p. 137). Even in its early phases British antislavery had a mass base, so Haskell must explain its attraction to such groups as wage-earners, domestics, rural labourers, and tenant farmers. Near the end of his book, Blackburn explicitly answers the question raised by Haskell:

Market forces often worked with an impersonality and ruthlessness that actually permitted and promoted a circuit of capitalist accumulation nourished by slave exploitation. The abolitionists found that it was not easy to win over those most directly involved in the slave-related trades; consumer boycotts had negligible effect while businessmen faced with a profitable investment saw no reason to leave it to a rival. While a few individuals did withdraw for ethical reasons from involvement in slavery there was not a shortage of those willing to take their place. Markets set up a structure which appeared to erase individual responsibility for the pattern of resultant action (p. 535).

Blackburn adds, perhaps with a touch of sarcasm, that if antislavery was strengthened by the market it was through the slaves who "saw a market in labour power as preferable to a market in human beings" (p. 535).

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The British West Indies during the American Revolution. SELWYN H.H. CARRINGTON. The Netherlands: Foris Publications, 1988. 222 pp. (Paper Dfl. 30,-)

At the outbreak of the American Revolution, there were thirty-two British colonies in America. A substantial historical literature has sought to explain how the nineteen colonies that did not revolt responded to the Revolution and what impact it had upon them. Based upon extensive research in both economic and political records, Selwyn H.H. Carrington's volume is the most ambitious and most successful effort yet undertaken to address these questions as they relate to the eleven British West Indian colonies. The author's principal thesis is that the Revolution had a profound impact upon the West Indies, where it both inaugurated a long-term economic decline and intensified a longstanding movement for local political autonomy.

Seven of ten substantive chapters treat the economic impact of the Revolution. Reaffirming Richard B. Sheridan's earlier contention that "1775 was the watershed date in the unrestricted economic growth of the sugar colonies" (p. 1), Carrington adduces much evidence to illustrate the vibrancy of the West Indian colonial economies during the three decades beginning in the mid-1740s. For the British West Indies as a whole, this was an era of phenomenal economic expansion that saw a significant extension of plantation agriculture in Jamaica and the establishment of five new colonies: the Virgin Islands, in the 1750s, and the four ceded island colonies in 1763. Although wars, natural disasters such as droughts and hurricanes, and adverse market conditions occasionally brought short-term economic reversals, production throughout these years moved steadily upward, and profits remained high. Even an older colony like Barbados, which had earlier experienced serious economic difficulties, enjoyed mild prosperity.

As Carrington appreciates, the ingredients in this success were many and complex. Chiefly, they included an expanding world market for sugar, coffee, and other West Indian products; preferential treatment in British metropolitan markets; low transportation costs; a seemingly limitless supply of relatively inexpensive slave labor from Africa; and cheap provisions and lumber from the American mainland colonies. Thoroughly dominated by North American merchants, the North American-West Indian trade had proven of enormous mutual benefit to both sets of colonies, Carrington regarding it as the single most important element in the economic health of the sugar islands. "Throughout the colonial period", he writes, "the prosperity of the sugar islands" had been "guaranteed by their unrestricted trade with the continent" (p. 25).

More fully than any previous writer, Carrington shows the extent to which the U.S. War for Independence adversely affected the economies of the West Indian colonies. Disruption of established trading patterns by the activities of American privateers and, later, the French navy both drove up freight rates and insurance and reduced "the flow of slaves to a trickle" (p. 102). Even more significant, in Carrington's view, were the prohibitions on commerce with the revolting colonies. Notwithstanding the development of a brisk contraband trade through foreign islands, the stoppage of established trade flows, he shows in some detail, both created a major subsistence crisis in the islands and raised prices for provisions and lumber to levels that cut sharply into profits. Increased imports from Britain and Ireland could not supply existing food and lumber requirements. Rising prices did not offset accelerating costs. The consequences were malnutrition and starvation among slaves and heavy economic losses among the planters. "By the end of the war," Carrington writes, "few planters were able to meet the costs of their estates and most were heavily indebted" (p. 180).

So profound were the economic consequences of the war, the author contends in seconding a contemporary opinion held by Edward Long and Bryan Edwards, among others, that they "initiated the continuous decline of the British West Indies." By sapping "the resilience so characteristic of eighteenth century planters," he writes, the "Revolution had virtually broken" their "spirit" (p. 66). Britain's refusal after the war to permit the unrestricted resumption of the North American-West Indian trade perpetuated the downward economic slide through the 1780s. Although dislocations caused by the French Revolution subsequently enabled the British West Indian plantation system to survive for several more decades, the separation of the North American colonies was thus, in Carrington's opinion, the principal reason for its eventual demise.

By concluding his study in 1787, the author has not provided the evidence necessary to verify this conclusion. Much more work on the extent - and character - of the West Indian economic revival of the 1790s and the first decade of the nineteenth century needs to be done before it will be possible to evaluate the long-term effects of the American Revolution upon the West Indian economy. In the meantime, although few will dispute the seriousness of its short-term impact, about which Carrington has written so effectively, many will continue to put greater emphasis on the later abolition of slavery in explaining the economic decline of the sugar colonies.

If the economic effects of the American War for Independence were disastrous for the West Indian colonies, the political were quite salutary, at least from the perspective of traditional island political objectives. In

three short chapters, Carrington sketches the political histories of four colonies – Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent, and St. Kitts – just before and during the war years. The brevity of these chapters prevents firm conclusions. If, however, the trends reported obtained generally, the West Indian colonies not only shared continental political ideology before and during the war but also managed to make significant strides in their longstanding quest for local autonomy. Worsening economic conditions and shared hostility to British colonial policy enhanced political consciousness among West Indian leaders, who exhibited considerable pro-republican sentiment during the war. Moreover, despite Carrington's subscription to the old cliché that absenteeism had sharply "reduced" (p. 159) the effectiveness of white leadership in the islands by the last half of the eighteenth century, his material leaves little doubt that local assemblies were yet extraordinarily vigorous political institutions with marked continuity of leadership that, in any contest of authority, was more than a match for any Crown governor.

Observing that the only "major difference" on the political and constitutional issues surrounding the American Revolution between the island and continental colonies was "the length to which they would go to achieve their aims" (p. 139), Carrington once again briefly addresses the old question of why the islands did not join the continent in the struggle for independence. Not unconventional, his explanation stresses in descending order of importance planter absenteeism, deeper economic and cultural links with Britain, greater strategic vulnerability, and a numerically vastly superior slave population, a rank order that this reviewer would arrange exactly in reverse.

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Patricios y plebeyos: burgueses, hacendados, artesanos y obreros. Las relaciones de clase en el Puerto Rico de cambio de siglo. ANGEL G. QUINTERO RIVERA. Río Piedras, P.R. Ediciones Huracán, 1988. 332 pp. (Paper n.p.)

Angel Quintero is one of the leading members of a group of Puerto Rican scholars who in recent years, under the umbrella of the Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Puertorriqueña, have carried out a number of innovating and stimulating studies in which the Puerto Rican past is subjected to

the methods and interests of anthropology and sociology. Readers of this journal are acquainted with a good example of Quintero's approach ('The rural-urban dichotomy in the formation of Puerto Rico's cultural identity', *NWIG*, 61, 3/4, pp. 127-145).

The book under review contains five of Quintero's other contributions to this 'new Puerto Rican historiography', several of which are revisions of earlier articles. Each is presented as a chapter.

The first chapter offers a splendid analytic description of the role and function of Puerto Rico's main cities, San Juan and Ponce, around the turn of the century. Partly elaborating his *NWIG* article, Quintero juxtaposes the origins, social and economic structures, styles, symbols and ethos of both towns. San Juan is depicted as the walled city, the domain of officialdom and the military, and the main import center; Ponce as the increasingly important domain of those social classes that were linked to the cultivation and export of agricultural products; San Juan as a bulwark of colonialism, Ponce as a bastion of an emergent 'native' bourgeoisie. Fascinating pages in this essay deal with the ways in which the architecture of both cities reflects these contrasts, and with the role of Ponce in the cultivation of the *danza* and its elevation to a national symbol.

A related theme is discussed in the fourth chapter. The *hacendado* class (with many immigrants in its midst), aspiring to evolve from regional to national hegemony, had to depend on the *letrados* for the elaboration of an ideology which would legitimize these aspirations. But, even though many professionals had close ties with the landowning and commercial élite, their group interests were not entirely identical. Each group was bent on increasing its own power and influence, and used for this purpose its own resources and instruments. By subtly analyzing the work of such turn-of-the century *letrados* as Brau, Hostos and Romero, Quintero attempts to unravel the complex relations between their ideas about how (Puerto Rican) society was, or should be, organized on the one hand, and the changing social environment of which they were a part, on the other.

The middle of the book deals with a later period (1900-1934) and with topics of a more narrowly political and economic nature.

Chapter three shows how the bright future envisaged by the leaders of the *Partido Socialista* and based on their expectation of an increasing proletarianization resulting from the industrialization of sugarcane production, was dimmed when, from the mid-twenties on, it became clear that unemployed, rather than proletarians, were growing in number.

Chapter four presents an analysis of the effects the expansion of the modern sugarcane sector had on political ideology and election results.

In his final chapter, the author confronts his earlier *Conflictos de clase en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Ed. Huracán, 1977) with the results of subsequent research by himself and others. In this way the reader is made a witness to the ongoing and lively debate among the various participants of 'the new Puerto Rican historiography', an inspiring endeavor of which Quintero's book is a prime example.

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